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OF EVIL

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THE
EXTINCTION OF EVIL.

THREE THEOLOGICAL ESSAYS,

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TRANSLATED, WITH AN INTRODUCTORY CHAPTER, BY

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THE PREFACE BY

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"That God may be all in all."—1 COR. xv. 28.

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CHARLES H. WOODMAN,
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'Tis Death—* * *

As though my very being had given way,
As though I was no more a substance now,
And could fall back on nought to be my stay,
And turn no whither, but must needs decay
And drop from out the universal frame
Into that shapeless, scopeless, blank abyss,
That utter nothingness of which I came!

* * * * *

That sense of ruin which is worse than pain;
That masterful negation and collapse
Of all that makes me man; as though I bent
Over the dizzy brink
Of some sheer, infinite descent!
Or worse, as though
Down, down forever, I was falling through
The solid framework of created things,
And needs must sink and sink
Into the vast abyss.

From The Dream of St. Gerontius.—J. H. NEWMAN.



PREFACE.

The French pieces, of which an English translation is given in the following pages, form some of the principal contributions of Dr. Emanuel Petavel to a theological movement which has now lasted for forty years ; having at length attained dimensions which promise a far wider extension in years to come. Like all other modern theories of Biblical interpretation it is a revival,—but one inwardly endowed with an unusual confidence, that it is indeed a revival of apostolic teaching, taken in its most obvious sense from the records of Holy Scripture.

The leading idea of the movement is that man, although capable of survival as to his spirit, in the death of time, is not absolutely immortal, or by nature destined to endless life ; but is under sentence of capital punishment, or extinction of all life, through sin original and individual,—a destiny from which he is to be saved only through the Divine Incarnation, that is, the union of the Eternal Life of God with human nature in the person of Christ, by Regeneration, and by Resurrection in glory. False religions everywhere represent salvation as man's natural work towards God. The one true

religion of Christ represents salvation as God's supernatural work towards man. This work of God consists in three acts of grace : (i.) in the Incarnation of the Eternal Word, that thereby in the Atonement by the Sacrifice unto death of the God-Man, He might "make an end of sins," and bring in the free gift of justification of life, or acceptance for sinners ; (ii.) in the gift of the Holy Spirit to dwell, as in a temple, in the body of the believer (1 Cor. vi.) to communicate the Divine Image and Eternal Life to the soul ; (iii.) in the future Resurrection of the Dead in "glory and honor and immortality." (Rom. viii. 1-14.) Then the message of the Gospel of God is summed up in divine words thus,—*Unless men are born twice, they will die twice.* "Ye must be born again," or die the "second death." (John iii. 1-7 ; Apocalypse xx. 14.) Those who do not possess the sanctifying, renewing, immortalizing Spirit will perish everlastingly. Those who are born of God, will "live," in the glory of the Father, in this boundless universe, "for ever and ever."

The adherents of this doctrine believe that nothing is more incredible than that—in a revelation delivered in two distinct languages, Hebrew and Greek, at sundry times and in divers manners, during fifteen hundred years, from the days of Moses to those of St. John—all the principal words employed in both,

to denote the issues of obedience or disobedience to God, are uniformly to be understood in a "figurative" sense, and were so used by the writers, without breaking down once into the plain and literal meaning of the terms for *life* and *death* eternal.

Accordingly, this proposed natural and indeed scientific mode of dealing with the Scripture Revelation, once set forth, has spread rapidly throughout the missions of the Anglo-Saxon world, through India, and through the English-speaking colonies. It has been widely extended also in America, although official persons are seemingly ignorant of the fact. It has also been widely extended in French-speaking countries.

Among those who have taken the lead in the successful diffusion of these ideas have been Dr. Petavel and M. Charles Byse, both now of Lausanne. I myself was some years before them in the English field, in this enterprise, but to them are specially due the opening and prosecution of the propaganda on the European Continent. To this labor, including their joint translation into French of my own work entitled *Life in Christ*, they brought the most complete understanding of the doctrine to be maintained, the most exact and finished Biblical scholarship, and the resources of a peculiarly penetrating and attractive style. Frenchmen have often said

that few English books have enjoyed the advantage of such a translator as my beloved friend, M. Charles Byse. For the result, it may be said that Dr. Petavel and M. Charles Byse have firmly established this doctrine among the theologies of Europe, and given it a commanding place in the religious thought of the Protestant Churches.

The principal piece contained in these essays is a masterpiece of French controversial writing in the original; but holds a still more important place in theology, as the most complete exegetical refutation of the vague schemes of Universalism now in vogue, in view of their bold pretensions to represent the teaching of Holy Scripture. It establishes, as on a rock, the main truth that, although all souls may survive in the first death,—some perhaps for instruction, some for judgment, some for happy repose, or, on the other hand, all in unconsciousness,—such survival affords no pledge of immortality, any more than the survival of the butterfly from the chrysalis gives an assurance of the butterfly's eternal being; since at the resurrection of judgment the finally reprobate will be "destroyed body and soul in Gehenna." (Matt. x. 28.) "Broad is the way that leadeth to destruction; but strait is the gate which leadeth unto life." "The world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God, abideth for ever."

(1 John ii. 17.) For all who, after exhausting and refusing the methods of mercy, lose the eternal life, there remains only the awful sentence of "destruction from among the people," "everlasting destruction" in the "second death." (Acts iii. 23 ; 2 Thess. i. 9.)

The influence of this faith in preaching is to communicate a reality to thought, feeling, and speech, which is itself an attestation of truth ; and I know, after forty-five years' experience in active evangelization, of no practical results of such instruction, when accompanied by the setting forth of the Cross of Christ as the means of pardon, and of the Indwelling Spirit as the Agent of regeneration and sanctification, except those that accompany salvation. Of course, if men convert these ideas into a pulpit hobby on eschatology, these truths will do as little good, and as much harm, as any other selected topics when similarly treated.

Therefore I heartily desire for this noble defence of Divine Truth, in its English dress, a wide circulation in America ; being confident that no recent publications are so well fitted to stay the spiritual mischief of the popular Universalist sentimentalism as this work of my honored friend and fellow-laborer in Switzerland. As such I commend it respectfully to the study of the American churches.

EDWARD WHITE.

*Hilda's Mount, Highwood Hill, London, N. W.
November 1st, 1888.*

SECOND ESSAY.—*Continued.*

of suicide—Evil does not reside in innocent matter—II. UNIVERSALISM IS UNSCRIPTURAL:—Destruction the fate of the impenitent—Man overrated—Scriptures apparently favorable to Universalism examined—Unpardonable Sin—Letter and spirit—The Law of Progress—The Divine Paternity—Conditionalism alone honors the prerogatives of God and man—III. UNIVERSALISM IS MORALLY DANGEROUS:—Fear an important motive—Universalism makes light of sin—Contradicts itself—Sets out with a *petitio principii*—Is giving way at its foundation . . . 76–133

THIRD ESSAY. CHRIST'S FAVORITE MAXIM.

“Whosoever will save his life shall lose it, and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it;” etc. (Matt. xvi. 25, 26.) This declaration examined from the point of view of Conditional Immortality—A Divine Paradox, the significance of which is obscured by the traditional interpretation, becomes translatable and of momentous interest 134–146

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INTRODUCTION

BY THE TRANSLATOR.

We, whose names appear upon the title-page of this small book, are among those who believe that human life can acquire endless duration only through conformity to the Law of Eternal Life declared in the Christian revelation. We believe that immortality must be sought at the feet of Him "who only hath" it. The traditional dogma that endless life is the inherent and necessary attribute of every human soul, is repudiated ; and with it the two mischievous corollaries to which it lends support,—the doctrines of Eternal Torment and of Universal Salvation.

The reader of these pages will bear in mind the pre-eminence of the main question. This question concerns only the *ultimate* state of those human beings who remain persistently irresponsive to the proffers of the gospel of the Son of God.¹

¹ Much confusion has arisen in recent discussions of Immortality through a want of agreement touching the question under discussion. It is one thing for Christians in common to join issue upon the question of *post mortem* life with a *materialistic science*, and quite another thing for them to divide

While between Dr. Petavel and myself there transpired some time since what he has honored me by styling "an identical shade of belief," it would be no easy task to find two minds among all those holding the same opinion upon the main question between whom an equal similarity exists. Unquestionably the prevalence of the doctrine here defended has been seriously impeded by low and carnal views of the human soul which to certain writers have seemed indispensable to any argument for its destructibility.

among themselves as to the condition, duration and quality of that future life. In either case the question of Immortality is in debate; but in the case first supposed, that question will take a form that compels all Christians, and indeed all believers in a future life of whatever kind or duration, to stand together in defense of the spiritual philosophy which they embrace in common, and which physical science not only does not, but, by reason of its essential limitations, cannot disprove. As against the materialist, we shall all affirm human immortality, which is to say, that the death of the body is not the end of a man. In maintaining this position, however, the question what conditions and restrictions, or possible forfeiture, may be attached to the prize of an imperishable life, is left quite in abeyance. An illustration of the apparent inconsistency into which a writer may fall, owing to his reader's ignorance of the question he is discussing, has come under my notice through the recent publication in *The Critic* of a posthumous letter of J. J. Rousseau. Somewhere (I think in his Confessions) Rousseau says: "Not all the subtilties of metaphysics can make me doubt for a moment the Immortality of the soul and a beneficent Providence. I feel it. I believe it. I desire it. I hope for it, and will defend it to my latest

But it is clear that a creation of God, though constituted of immaterial elements, and even differing essentially from lower orders of creatures, can have only that term of duration which its creator affixes to it; if it began, it may also end. The supposition of a unique spiritual and substantial organism in the case of man which may at length cease to be self-conscious, and dissolve, like other organisms, into the subtle essences of the unseen universe, if it have occurred to certain writers upon this subject, has been by them quite too summarily dismissed.

By others, the Bible—confessedly the high court of appeal—is handled mechanically, rather than according to those methods which modern scholarship approves.

A further objection to much that has been written breath." In the letter alluded to (addressed to M. Vernet, Pastor in Geneva, and dated Feb. 18, 1758), the same sentiment is repeated, whereupon speaking in the next sentence of the doctrine of eternal torment, he proceeds as follows: "It is true there are souls so black that I cannot conceive of their ever being able to enjoy that eternal beatitude of which it seems to me the sweetest feeling must be that of self-contentment. *This makes me suspect that the souls of the wicked may be annihilated . . . and that to be and to feel is the chief reward of a life well spent.*" Notwithstanding such verbal confusion, it becomes plain that there is no inconsistency of thought when we consider that the first passage is directed against the materialism of the world, the second against the extreme rigor of the dogma of eternal pain.

upon the main question, is its lack of accord with the teachings of Nature. It can no longer be doubted that want of sympathy with the spirit and processes of natural law constitutes a mental defect for which even fidelity to the letter of Scripture can but partially atone. Too much praise cannot be given to the author of "Natural Law in the Spiritual World" for the light that book has thrown upon the Christian revelation from the side of Nature. The claims of the writer may be at times extravagant; his fundamental thesis may even be mistaken; but the book has been objected to for reasons other than those which appear upon the pages of its reviewers. The trend of its analogies is against the doctrine of the essential indestructibility of the individual human life. Grant that the power of this book lies in the force of multiplied analogies between the Works and Word of God, what is more cogent than the exhibition of such pre-established harmony? What is termed Nature is not the corrupt book some take it to be. It is only the nature of man which has been affected by the dark entailments of sinning centuries. We may discredit the record of the unassisted human conscience; we may reject the utterances of unassisted reason, as a palimpsest whose original characters are overwritten with those of a debased intelligence, but the law and order of the natural world are

unaffected by human conduct ; the lily of Palestine was as beautiful in the hand of Judas as in the hand of John. The strata of Mount Zion were not tilted by the superincumbent piety which pressed the temple courts, nor those of the hill of Ephraim by the perfidy of Jonathan the Levite. Who will deny that the knowledge of God's uniform method of operation in the natural world, especially in organic nature, were such knowledge attainable, would constitute one of the most conclusive declarations of His will and way? Nor is full justice always done to the fact that man himself is part of the system which we call Nature. The law of life written within the scroll of a hyacinth's bulb or a bird's egg is a text free from the errors of copyists or the corruptions of age.

The question discussed in this work will be decided for Christians by the teaching of the Word of God. It is idle, however, to deny the corroborative authority of the laws of Nature, and equal recognition is due to the demands of the Christian consciousness.

The careful student of the subject of human immortality will distinguish between immortality proper, or absolute deathlessness, and the soul's mere survival of the death of the body. It is the inattention of writers to this distinction which has so confused the discussion of the important question before us.

The so-called *hypothesis* of conditional immortality does not rest upon the denial of life beyond the grave to those who are, in accordance with the same hypothesis, doomed by sin to ultimate extinction. The resurrection of the "just and of the unjust" is generally conceded. If the Bible represent the other world as peopled to some extent with evil persons, principalities and powers, it does not, however, warrant the inference that these rebellious hosts must in virtue of an inherent immortality persist forever in their insurgent schemes. Sooner or later, "evil shall slay the wicked."

In Plato's celebrated dialogue, the "Phædon", Cebes urges upon Socrates the doubt whether, even though the soul should be liberated by physical death for higher activities, it might not still in time wear itself out and disappear. (Sect. 127.)¹ The objection of Cebes is met and overcome by a mere *petitio principii*. The objector is referred to the conclusion considered to have been reached in the previous discussion, that the soul must have pre-existed, and is asked to grant that, as, in the nature

¹ "The Spirit is not necessarily regarded [by the peoples of the earth] as *immortal* because it does not perish with the body." Lubbock, *Origin of Civilization*, page 233. "When they dream, savages firmly believe themselves to be visited by their spirits, and hence believe, not indeed in the immortality of the soul, but in its survival of the body." *Ibid*, page 216.

of things, life excludes death, so *the soul, of which life is the inseparable attribute*, also excludes death. Indeed, the doctrine of pre-existence is, to-day, as it appears in here and there a Christian mind, the rudimentary organ by which we detect the pagan lineage of this pet delusion: the simplicity and indestructibility of the human soul. This half forgotten doctrine is the “tendo Achillis” of the Platonic argument for immortality. To relinquish it, is to render the objection of Cebes insuperable.

The teaching of primitive Christianity, now renewed in the church, was that, even though the soul survive the dissolution of the body, it cannot survive sin except through reconciliation to God and a regenerate life.¹ The individual may outlive his body, but sin, when it is full grown, bringeth forth death. Utter and ultimate sin involves ultimate and utter death.

At this point we are met,—so inveterate is the hold upon the average mind of the philosophic doctrine of the soul’s indestructibility,—with the assertion that the word *death*, when applied to the soul, is invariably used in its figurative sense, implying only moral disorder and its attendant misery. The scope of this introduction precludes the complete

¹ “The sin, when it is full grown, bringeth forth death.”—Jas. i. 15. *Revised Version*.

discussion of the question here raised. The untenableness of the assumption may, however, be seen from the following considerations :

(1) Though the word *death* be restricted to signify spiritual disease, we know nothing with more philosophical certainty than that the tendency and final issue of all disease is to destroy the organism affected thereby. The theory here defended makes no less of such moral disorder than the traditional view ; rather, more ; since it represents the malady as progressive in its power and effects to the point of extermination. In the language of Professor Stokes, now President of the Royal Society of London, "Let it not be thought that, to rest the hope of immortality on the promise of the gift of eternal life lowers our idea of what this expression conveys ; that those who attach a purely figurative interpretation to it understand by it something far higher. The notion that to base our hopes of immortality on the promise of eternal life involves any degradation of the meaning of the term merely arises from the previous divorce of the idea of immortality from that of obedience and concurrent happiness. . . . Thus the promise of eternal life, as involving eternal living existence, carries with it, *even in idea*, as it does by the express declarations of Scripture, all that the advocates of a

purely figurative interpretation put upon it; but it carries something more, namely, living existence itself ”¹

(2) While the word *death*, in literature both sacred and profane, bears sometimes, of course, a restricted interpretation, common sense, not to say scholarship, demands that the exclusion of the full sense of the word rest upon other and higher grounds than an arbitrary and dogmatic lexicography. When it is shown to be absurd that the soul can be destroyed, it will be legitimate to seek a qualified meaning for a word of very simple and well-understood significance. Until then, it seems only reasonable to give to the word in general its most natural and usual sense. According to that sense the soul, like organisms of which the same thing is predicated, when its death is complete, has lost forever its function and its feeling.

The Bible,—our adversaries themselves being judges,—offers no word of proof that the soul is indestructible. But they assert that while the immortality of the soul, as such, is not taught in the Scriptures, it is taken for granted. Upon what ground does the Bible take it for granted? Upon the ground of general consent? The important sect of the Sadducees, at least, denied the doctrine. The Egyp-

¹ “Immortality; a symposium,” page 121.

tians held only to the immortality of some souls.¹ The Orientals, in countless millions, ignore it. Plato labored with the proofs. It could not therefore have been on the ground of universal consent.² Or had these proofs of Greek philosophy demonstrated it? The number who were acquainted with the arguments was as insignificant as the arguments themselves are inconclusive. Concerning the value of the latter, the judgment of the majority of thinkers of all schools is fairly expressed by that of Mr. Matthew Arnold: "By what futilities the demonstration of our immortality may be attempted is to be seen in Plato's *Phædo*. The want of solidity in such argument is so palpable that one scarcely cares to turn a steady regard upon it at all." "Proceeding to the surer proofs," the same writer continues: "a certainty is the Sense of Life, of being truly alive, which accompanies righteousness. If this experimental sense does not rise to be stronger in us, does not rise to the sense of being inextinguishable, that is probably because our sense of righteousness is really so very small. This strong sense of life

¹ See quotation from Edouard Naville in last chapter of "Immortality: a Symposium." Th. Whitaker, 1885. Also article "Soul," Chambers' Encyc. Ed. 1879.

² "The belief in a universal, independent, and endless existence is confined to the very highest races of men." Lubbock *Origin of Civilization*, p. 372.

from righteousness . . . is the true basis of all religious aspiration after immortality.”¹ There is this difference between the “true basis” of Mr. Arnold and that upon which we insist: with him, as with us, immortality is from righteousness; but, in his view, the ground of assurance is wholly subjective and natural. With us it is also objective and supernatural. If he would compel us “to go with him one mile,” we will “go with him twain.” The position taken by him is the position of Conditional Immortality, albeit, it is taken independently of the direct scriptural evidence, on purely naturalistic grounds, and hence, of course, with only tentative faith. We believe the basis of faith in immortality upon which he insists to be also clearly revealed. It is not uncommon to encounter a similar presentation of the subject by those who accept the Bible as the record of express divine revelation. In a sermon delivered upon Easter Sunday, 1886, Dr. Phillips Brooks employs language strikingly similar to the foregoing: “It is not immediately revealed to man that he is to live forever. The revelation of immortality cannot come to a life until it has become imbued with the sense of its own greatness, and found it to be a

¹ *Literature and Dogma*, Ch. xiii., 34. See also Jowett's Introduction to the *Phædo* where the same arguments are pronounced “artificial rather than real.”

thing of which it is conscious of itself." Of the outward proofs upon which arguments for immortality have rested, he declares: "they do not give man the first feeling that he is immortal." Notwithstanding this disparagement of outward evidences, and the positing of the sense of immortality in the experience of conscious kinship and likeness to God, what is our surprise to hear the same speaker declare in the next breath: "Every living [human] being is immortal. It is something that belongs to the very human nature and existence." From this noble preacher we do, however, derive the impression that the *consciousness* of immortality is conditional, though the thing itself, he says, belongs to every human being by virtue of very existence. The two propositions if not mutually destructive, are not logically related to each other. The concurrence of view here manifest between two representatives of the higher thought of the day may at least suffice to show that the *sense* of immortality in this present time is qualified by rightness of relation to God. There is not, then, universal consent even now. Could such consent have existed in the ages when the Bible was written? The grounds upon which the Bible takes for granted man's native and indefectible immortality must be sought elsewhere.

We leave to the defenders of this dogma the sup-

port of their alleged axiom, solacing ourselves meanwhile with their concession that believers in Conditional Immortality do not encounter the direct opposition of Scripture. It is equally true that they do not antagonize "universal consent," nor any sufficient or even respectable philosophic proof. The way is therefore prepared for us to show that the things which are not against us are for us.

It is admitted on all hands, whatever relative importance is assigned to ante-christian belief upon the subject, that the definite expectation of immortal life is the distinct fruit of Christianity. This conclusion is expressed by Lessing in the following words: "Christ was the first authoritative, practical teacher of the immortality of the soul. The first authoritative teacher: because of the prophecies which were in him fulfilled; authoritative through the miracles which he wrought; authoritative through his own resurrection from the dead, by which he sealed his teaching. The first practical teacher: for while with others the immortality of the soul was no more than a philosophical speculation, to be supposed, wished for, or believed, with him it is that whereby we are to regulate the inner and the outer life."

Such being the case, it would seem that the most tremendous interest should attach to the utterances

of Christ upon this subject. To us, moreover, who believe the Scriptures to be here both categorical and authoritative, it is incomprehensible how Christian teachers can rest chiefly upon those assurances vaguely intimated by pagan philosophy and supported by the tradition of a majority which, in matters of Christian faith, is always acquiescent rather than inquisitive. If it be acknowledged that immortality first became an established faith with the establishment of Christianity, it is incumbent upon us to inquire with a scrupulous candor what the Christian doctrine is; whether its promise of eternal life is conditioned or unconditioned; whether that may not have happened to the doctrine which has surely happened to the religion as a whole; that is, whether it has not been *professed* without being *possessed*; whether Christendom, regenerate and unregenerate, has not laid an indiscriminate claim to the portion and inheritance promised to him only who "hath the Christ"; and "who by patient continuance in well doing seek for honor and glory and immortality."

I may here say that it was through such study, provoked, of course, by a degree of mental unrest, but preceding the perusal of any controversial work, that the writer reached a conclusion upon the main question which has been confirmed by all subsequent investigation, and which satisfies at once the de-

mands of Scripture, of reason, and of the moral consciousness,—a conclusion which honors both the justice of God and the freedom of man ; the conclusion that he only can live forever who will live unto God.

Incidentally, this conclusion involves the rejection of the terrific dogma of eternal torment, which drives half the church to morbid despair and the other half to a maudlin hope. Retribution is the inevitable portion of those who sin ; but of this retribution, always painful, the event will be sooner or later everlasting destruction. We know not through what cycles of time the conscious torment of the sinner may continue, but trust we honor God by the reverent hope that it may not survive that far-off and final catastrophe when the last enemy shall be destroyed. Traditional theology says, the soul that sinneth shall suffer ; Conditionalism, affirming as much, goes further and declares that it shall also cease. The reader, when convinced that the immortality of all souls is at present an unverified hypothesis, not taught by Scripture, not proved by Plato, not held by all, either in ancient or in modern times, may be left to decide which of the views presented above best comports with the declaration of the Bible : “The soul that sinneth, it shall die.”

The characterization of the view here defended as

“Annihilation” has proved so valuable an ally to its opponents’ argumentation that it may be vain to enter another protest against the employment of that term. Candor and courtesy must still be relied on to exempt the doctrine here set forth from the odium attached to a misleading word. It is enough to say that another designation is preferred; one which does not at the start reverse the order of thought and place the sinner and his Maker in false relations to each other. The Bible speaks of a class who “by patient continuance in well doing seek for honor and glory and immortality.” There is implied, here and elsewhere, a remnant of the human race who will not have sought effectually the same immortal life. Surely, it is not to be said of the latter class that they need to be annihilated! They annihilate themselves,—if one please so to say,—they return in the course of nature to nonentity, as conscious personalities; but to speak of a further decree or execution of annihilation upon them is to impose upon the Divine Being a superfluous function. No more absurd would it be to speak of unfrocking a *candidate* for priestly orders who had never yet been invested with canonicals.

The phrase “Conditional Immortality” seems upon the whole the one most descriptive of the doctrine here set forth. It embodies the essential thought

expressed by the Master in John vi. 51. "I am the living bread which came down out of heaven; IF ANY MAN EAT OF THIS BREAD, HE SHALL LIVE FOR EVER."

Nothing is more palpable at present than the unsettled condition of Christian eschatology. It appears in controversial prints, in sermons, in newspapers, in processes for heresy, and in the table-talk of intelligent people everywhere. Nowhere, however, is it more manifest than in the loss of a certain moving power which the pulpit formerly possessed in its appeals to healthy fear. By whatever access of "sweet reasonableness" or of "the larger hope" this loss may be compensated, it is a serious thing for the prophet, when he bears down upon his lever, to feel that it is the fulcrum, and not the weight above, which is yielding to his pressure. And it does seem that men no longer tremble when he reasons "of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come." The denunciations of the pulpit are heard with indifference tempered with respect. Hell is "hollow" indeed. The terrible legend: "He who enters here leaves hope behind" has been smilingly removed from its portal. If hope is eternal, the masses will be saved by hope. The preacher may indeed suggest that "hope deferred maketh the heart sick"; he may even venture to assert that

eternal hope to him by whom it is never realized is but a form of hell. But he who should preach the traditional orthodoxy upon this subject, as it was formerly preached, would very soon miss his audience without being at all puzzled to know what had become of them.

I have heard it said recently, by an officer in one of the most important Presbyterian Churches in the city of New York, that every minister within a radius of a mile of him was suspected of Universalism. While all such reports are liable to great inaccuracy, it is notorious that the sharp scriptural antithesis between the saved and the lost is well nigh obliterated. That rigorous twofoldness of classification which a former age never questioned, has given place to a threefoldness and a manifoldness in which differences of character are apprehended as differences of degree and not of kind.

It is no ranting infidel, but Dr. Jowett, who exclaims in presence of the problem of Immortality: "Who are the wicked and who are the good whom we venture to divide by a hard and fast line; and in which of the two classes should we place ourselves and our best friends? May we not suspect that we are making differences of kind because we are unable to imagine differences of degree? Putting the whole human race into heaven or into hell for the greater

convenience of logical division, are we not at the same time describing them both in superlatives only that we may satisfy the demands of rhetoric?"*

The entertaining of such a question is possible to those only who have renounced the authority of the Word of God.

But what shall we say when the "great gulf" once fixed between the place of torment and Abraham's bosom is depicted by the pulpit of to-day "all dressed in living green"? And what is the inference drawn by those who perceive that endless conscious torment can no longer be preached? Many are aware of but a single alternative within the bounds of reason. The soul, *if* "*foredoomed to endless life*," must spend that eternity, if not in misery, then in felicity. In view of this fatal drift from Scylla to Charybdis, we, who see safety in a middle course, cannot remain silent. "Knowing the terror of the Lord, we" would "persuade men."

The discussion is not one of merely speculative importance. It concerns a fundamental motive of repentance; the reconciliation of the creed of Christendom with the character of Christ; the vindication of the Divine Benevolence in the creation and government of sentient beings; the harmonization

* *Plato's Dialogues*, Oxford Ed. Vol. I, p. 412.

of God's Word and works, and the arrest of a tendency, which, so surely as it enervates morality, will also undermine religion. It is true, such moral consequence is not by all thought to be involved. "I, too," writes a distinguished friend in the ministry, "believe that immortality is through Christ only, but I would let the words 'life' and 'death,' as they occur in Scripture, assert their own power over the mind." But what, we ask, if these words have acquired through long abuse, a meaning quite artificial? What if the very lexicons of the New Testament have borrowed their definitions from mediæval dogmatics? The kidnapped child, returning after years of maltreatment to the paternal roof, may need some assistance in establishing his identity and regaining his rights. As the Sphinx of Egypt, whose beauty and meaning the sands of centuries had effaced, could only assert its true proportions and significance by means of the explorer's spade, so these simple and solemn words, long buried beneath the rubbish of a mischievous interpretation, ask of us something more than to be let alone. It is quite too late to exclaim: *Noli me tangere*. Perverse hands have already touched them, and they must be touched again. And what if, by examining them with a spirit the most reverent and with an adequate intelligence, there should be restored

to Christendom the whole substance of their meaning? Would this be innovation? Would it constitute new theology? Would it not rather be a return to the simplicity which is in Christ, and to the purity of apostolic doctrine?¹ That there are many in this country who thus acquiesce in error rather than contend with a minority for a truth of such tremendous apologetic value, is painfully evident. If this small volume should serve to inspirit for open championship some of the able men who have thus far dared only to engage in the secret service of the truth, one of its chief aims will be realized.

The reader of the following pages will, we trust, be convinced that, upon grounds of interpretation, of philosophy, of analogy and of the Christian consciousness alike, it is not its endless conscious torment, but its final dissolution and cessation that is meant by the ultimate death of the soul. The question whether such a fate constitutes "eternal punishment" depends upon whether it be allowed to constitute punishment at all. *If it is punishment,*

¹ "If it should appear that the meaning of Scripture phrases has been changed, so that they do not now convey the sense which the inspired writers intended to convey by them; it should then be our aim to restore its original and proper sense so that when we would teach the same things which Christ and the apostles taught, we may teach them in the same manner." Leonard Woods, *Works* Vol. II, page 181.

it is surely eternal. Great are the sufferings of such a soul, returning with its aborted spiritual perceptions and faculties toward not-being, but greater is its loss. Its suffering is protracted; its loss is eternal.

It is the doctrine of this book that the "living soul"¹ of which the Scriptures speak can perpetuate itself as a living soul only by conforming to the law of God and of its own spiritual nature. That it can be eternized in sin and disorder is believed to be a theory full of all subtlety and mischief. A locomotive on the track remains a locomotive; off the track, it is, at least potentially and proleptically, old iron. The locomotive is not annihilated by leaving the track; but it is *delocomotized* by its deflection from a proper course and a foreordained environment. In default of its recovery to an upright position and a true relational adjustment, its "end is destruction." It would not be contended probably that out of the original stuff, to which it would thus be reduced another locomotive might not be constructed like the first, and set in similar probationary relations to track and train. The enunciation of so homely a simile may serve then to set at naught the idle objections to the doctrine of conditional immortality

¹ An expression which Scripture applies to animals also, "*Nephesh haiia.*" Gen. i. 24, 30, etc.

based upon the irrelevant platitude, "nothing can be annihilated." Nothing need be annihilated. Man is an organism. If, as the result of persistent and incorrigible sin and its attendant disorder, he is *disorganized*, it is enough for the demands of our hypothesis. In that process of disorganization HE ceases. That it might still be possible for the Almighty to organize, out of this reverted primal stuff, *another* soul with similar potencies and in view of similar relations, and for a similar probation, it were as unreasonable to deny as it is unnecessary to assert.

"In the year 1770, Lessing wrote: 'I perceive that the controversy respecting the endlessness of hell punishments is about to be agitated again by our theologians. Would that it might be so agitated as to be finally settled and considered as done with! For undoubtedly the saddest thing in these controversies is that they settle nothing, and that twenty or fifty years later, any zealot or quibbler who is so disposed imagines himself justified in taking up the matter anew.'" To these really prophetic words the only answer is that no question is settled until it is settled aright.

This introduction may be fitly closed with the words of two distinguished Unitarian divines, contained in a work entitled—very significantly for the

purpose of this book—“*Concessions of Liberalists to Orthodoxy.*” “The peculiarity,” says Dr. Bartol, “in this Christian form of reward and retribution is, that it shows all the noble and worthy qualities as enlarging and preserving our being, and lifting it up into new measures of honor and durable joy ; but sets forth all disloyalty as contracting the soul, letting down its stature, and consigning it at last, in a sort of mental consumption, poor and dim with fading consciousness, to hell, to waste away and perish with the dross and offscouring of the world. Hell is thus not so much torment as loss. Compared with the infinite heaven it is indeed but a petty cell, as the Valley of Hinnom was to the huge swell of the earth. But let us not therefore imagine that we can smile at it, or be inspired by it with no dread. It is large enough for our decay. There is room in it for death and annihilation of faculty. It has space to provide our souls a grave.”¹

The words of Dr. F. H. Hedge are still more categorical and profound. Indeed, the writer knows not where to turn for so eloquent an expression, in few words, of his own shade of belief upon this awful subject : “What then,”—we renew the question,—“is the final destination of incorrigible and exceptional

¹ *Discourses on the Christian Body*, etc., p. 297.

souls? Not endless torment, we fancy, but everlasting spiritual death ; utter extinction of the moral life. All the analogies point to this conclusion ; all true deductions from the moral nature confirm it ; and for those who demand the warrant of the letter, what conclusion more just to the letter of the Scripture which declares that sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death? Conscience (or self-consciousness) is the life-principle of moral natures. The tendency of sin is to weaken and corrupt, and finally to mortify and destroy that principle. When, accordingly, the evil principle exceeds a certain stage of development, the soul loses the power of self-recovery, and—the evil tendency still proceeding—arrives at last to rest in evil as its good, and to sin without compunction, or any inward restraint or contradiction (the stage of devildom or evil spirits). Then—the evil tendency still proceeding—commences a process of mortification which involves, as its final consummation, loss of consciousness, for consciousness supposes a faculty of distinguishing good and evil, and loss of voluntary power, for voluntary power involves also a moral element. Sin is then finished and has brought forth death. The soul, as a moral agent and a conscious individuality, is extinct ; as a *monad* it still survives. No longer a person but a thing, its condition thence-

forth is not a question of psychology but of ontology. And here we dismiss it.”¹

Concerning the number of those who adopt the theodicy herein set forth, there is no longer need that much be said. “The study of statistics,” as Thomas Carlyle once wrote, “is not to be pursued in the vain hope of acquiring knowledge, but to prevent the ignorance of others from being thrust upon us.” Evidence thus derived is to be estimated, not by the bushel but by the pound. It may, however, be remarked in conclusion,—omitting from our category of believers in Conditional Immortality the writers of the New Testament,—that the doctrine held by Iguatius, Justin Martyr, Irenæus, and Theophilus of Antioch is not too new ; by John Locke, Richard Whately, Lotze, Richard Rothe, Renouvier, and Ch. Secretan, not too unphilosophical ; by Profs. Stokes, Bonney, Olshausen, Hermann Schultz, and C. F. Hudson, not too unscientific ; by Rev. Edward White, Drs. Dale of Birmingham and Parker of London, Dr. Lyman Abbott, the lamented H. W. Beecher, Dr. Huntington, Rector of Grace Church, New York, as well as by many leading revivalists, not too unevangelical, to be discussed henceforth upon its merits.

CHARLES H. OLIPHANT.

Methuen, Mass., June, 1889.

¹ *Christian Examiner*, July, 1859.

FIRST ESSAY.

The Struggle for Eternal Life.

THE ESSENTIAL CONDITIONS OF BEING.

When God created the world, He endowed every substance, organic and inorganic, with certain properties which make it what it is, and which it cannot lose without changing its nature and the very name it bears. If water, for instance, ceases to be liquid, it is no longer water, but vapor, or ice ; liquidity is an essential property of water, and the condition upon which this liquidity depends is a temperature between 32 and 212 degrees. No creature in the world is exempt from these conditions of existence, which are termed “laws” by science, and which constitute the chief object of scientific research.

Man, the king of nature, is himself subject to natural laws, known to science in its various departments of physiology, chemistry, dynamics, and others ; but he is also subject to higher laws, which govern the spiritual part of his being, and which it is for the moral philosopher to study and to define.

As Biblical students, our first duty is to consult revelation. What do the Scriptures teach us on this matter? They bring before us, as expressing the fundamental law of the human soul, a saying from Deuteronomy and another from Leviticus, which are combined by Jesus Christ in the gospel. *To love thyself; to love God more than thyself; and to love thy neighbor as thyself:* such is the triple foundation of the spiritual law, by voluntary submission to which the Bible tells us "man shall live."

Man was originally destined, through supreme love to God, to remain in eternal communion with the Source of Life, during which communion he could not die. But from the day when, by an act of rebellion, he broke the bond of love that united him to the Creator, his decay began.

There is a universal, necessary, "sovereign law which destroys that which opposes it, while giving life to that which obeys it." He who complies with this law lives and prospers; he who disregards it endangers his existence, withdraws gradually from the Source of Life, and declines in vitality as he does so. Should he persist in his alienation, he is doomed to final destruction.

When a branch, broken by the storm, is severed from the parent tree and cast upon the ground, it does not immediately lose its rich foliage. It is

filled with sap, and the fruit with which it is laden may possibly ripen in the mild warmth of an autumn sun ; but it will never come to perfection ; and while the living branches are spared to bring forth the leaves and blossoms of a future spring, the bough that has fallen from the trunk will become nothing more than dry, dead wood, fit for corruption or the fire. “Worms and fire,”—such are indeed the Biblical symbols descriptive of the final destruction of the impenitent. Wandering from the Source of Life, the sinner takes his slow funereal way towards eternal death.

THE SCRIPTURAL DOCTRINE.

“The soul that sinneth it shall die,” says the prophet Ezekiel. “If ye live after the flesh ye shall die ;” “the wages of sin is death,” says Paul. “Sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death,” says James : the death which kills “the body” ; then that which kills “both soul and body in hell,” the second death, spoken of in the Book of Revelation.¹

What is death but the extinction of life ? and what is life but a combination of action and perception ? Death, in its absolute sense, is therefore the cessation of all action and all perception. That this is the meaning of the word *death* is proved by the use

¹ Ezek. xviii. 4 ; Rom. vi. 23, viii. 13 ; Jas. i. 15 ; Matt. x. 28 ; Rev. ii. 11, xx. 6, 14.

which the apostle makes of it when he exhorts Christians to “mortify” (literally, put to death) sin and the desires of the flesh—*thanatoo*, *stauroo*, *necroo*. (Rom. viii. 13 ; Gal. v. 24 ; Col. iii. 5.) The object to be aimed at is “the *annihilation* of the evil element in man, of sin and lust.” We conclude, therefore, that the first death puts an end to the life of the body ; the second death consists chiefly in the destruction of the soul.

According to the Bible, the death of the body is only a symbol and prelude of the complete fate of the impenitent sinner ; it is progressive and irresistible decay. The failing eyes wax dim ; the ears discern sound as faintly as though it penetrated through the walls of a living tomb ; the stomach refuses food ; the weary limbs bend beneath their burden ; all the vital functions slacken ; a moment comes when they are totally suspended, and the man is no more.

But man does not perish for ever in the first death. A future life is revealed to us by more than one passage in the Old Testament, and by the most explicit assurances in the New.

According to the Bible, men at the resurrection are to be separated into two great divisions, the first of which contains those who have trusted in Divine mercy and lived a godly life. Reconciled to

God and trusting in His almighty love, especially as manifested by the sacrifice of His only Son ; regenerated, restored to harmony with the Sovereign of their being, and obedient to the law which for a little while they had forsaken, they will live for ever and ever in happiness.¹

The second class consists of hardened sinners, and those who have never heard or understood the good news of salvation. The latter are, by their condition, naturally exposed to perdition ; but we think that there are passages of Scripture which imply that they will be subjected to a fresh trial, and that a special appeal will be addressed to them. (1 Pet. iii. 19, 20 ; iv. 6.) In the present essay, however, we confine ourselves to an inquiry into the fate of impenitent and irreclaimable sinners.

Fire, according to Scripture, is the agent by which the enemies of God are to be finally consumed. The

¹ *Hina zoen echete*, John v. 40, xx. 31 : "*that ye might have life*" : such is "the great end of the Divine scheme and the keystone of St. John's theology." We may add that it is also the end of all Scripture revelation. We take the word *life* in its natural and fundamental meaning of animated existence, according to the sound and acknowledged rule which prescribes the acceptance of the literal and grammatical interpretation wherever the figurative is not self-evident and therefore unquestionable. This does not prevent us from *associating* with the obvious meaning of the vocable "life" the cognate ideas of *holiness* and *happiness*.

waters of the deluge, of which we are reminded by the rite of baptism, are also typical of destruction and as such frequently alluded to in the Bible. Water and fire alike are elements in which human life cannot exist; but while water buries and conceals its victims, fire causes them to disappear still more effectually.¹

Fire symbolizes total destruction. Fire changes the diamond, hardest of all substances, into a subtle vapor, dissolves granite and converts it into lava. Referring to these dread phenomena of nature, impenitent sinners might well exclaim: "Who among us shall dwell with the devouring fire? who among us shall dwell with everlasting burnings?"² The answer is, None! No sort of life is compatible with fire; and, according to the Bible, destruction by fire is the doom of the ungodly; "for, behold, the day cometh, that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble: and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the Lord of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch."³

To the horror of this fire the Book of Revelation adds the suffocating fumes of brimstone, an-

¹ Isa. xliii. 2; Matt. iii. 11. ² Isa. xxxiii. 14.

³ Mal. iv. 1.

other destructive agent; the cause of a speedy death to all living creatures exposed to it.

In twelve passages of the New Testament the last abode of impenitent sinners is termed Gehenna, a word which, we know, signifies the "Valley of Hinnom," in allusion to a gorge, situated at the base of the southwestern wall of Jerusalem, part of which was called Tophet, or Vale of the Oven, where certain kings of Judah had once caused their children to be burnt alive in honor of Moloch. When King Josiah ascended the throne, he "defiled" this valley, by making it the receptacle of all the refuse of the city, and the spot where the dead bodies of criminals and beasts of burden were flung. Fires were kept constantly burning to consume these corpses; whence arose the term *gehennan tou puros*, translated in the usual version "hell fire."¹

Such were the images suggested by the word Gehenna, which Jesus used in order to make His hearers understand the terrible and final death of impenitent souls: "Fear," He said, "Him which is able to DESTROY both body and soul in hell," literally, "in Gehenna." (Matt. x. 28.)²

¹ Isaiah already alludes to Tophet as a place of punishment: Isa. xxx. 33.

² *Apollumi*, the verb used with reference to "the meat which perisheth" (John vi. 27), is either *to bring to*, or *to be brought to, nought*. Thus, *to lose* means either to cause, or to suffer, loss and ruin. *To loose* and *to lose* both belong,

Thus, according to Scripture, utter destruction is the fate of hardened sinners. They are like sheep which, fleeing from their shepherd, fall a prey to the wolf, or to tormenting hunger and thirst, and die a miserable death. Authors of their own ruin, they shall “utterly perish,” says the apostle Peter, “as natural brute beasts, made to be taken and destroyed.”¹ “They shall be as though they had not been”;² “as the cloud is consumed and vanisheth away”;³ “as a dream when one awaketh”;⁴ “like a potter’s vessel dashed in pieces”;⁵ as “ashes under the soles of your feet”;⁶ as “smoke that consumes away”;⁷ “the workers of iniquity shall be destroyed for ever.”⁸

in fact, to the root of the Greek verb *apollumi*, viz.: *leas*, Anglo-Saxon, loose; *lu*, Sanscrit, to cut. The simple *luo*, in Greek itself, means occasionally to destroy. For instance, (1 John iii. 8) “The Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil.” True, the verb *apollumi* occurs in speaking of the prodigal son and of the lost piece of silver, both of which were found afterwards; but *for a time* the prodigal son was as good as lost to his father, and the coin as good as destroyed for its owner. It is sometimes objected that, whilst God *might* destroy the soul, He *will* never actually do it; but would not this render nugatory the warning given by Jesus in the passage quoted above?

¹ 2 Pet. ii. 12. ² Obad. 16; comp. Job x. 19. ³ Job vii. 9.

⁴ Ps. lxxiii. 20.

⁵ Ps. ii. 9; Rev. ii. 27; Rom. ix. 22; Matt. xxi. 44.

⁶ Mal. iv. 3.

⁷ Ps. xxxvii. 20.

⁸ Ps. xcii. 7; comp. 2 Thess. i. 9.

THE TRADITIONAL DOCTRINE.

Let us now proceed to compare these declarations of Scripture with the human traditions which have been perpetuated in the Church. In the first place, we find the Roman Catholic hell still filled with the tortures belonging to a barbarous age: red hot grid-irons, huge cauldrons full of boiling lead and brimstone, a pestilential atmosphere, and a multitude of horned and cloven-footed demons, who, goaded incessantly by the trident of their master, Satan, pursue the damned, inflicting upon them untold torments. Ages roll on; and without a moment's intermission torturers and victims fill the vast prison with horrible shrieks. We have rejected these monstrous fables, but have unfortunately preserved a word which recalls them, and which confuses the popular imagination by its constant misuse. It is the word *hell*, which the sacred writers never use in the peculiar sense which is generally given to it. It is confusing to employ this term to designate the place which the Old Testament calls *sheol*,¹ the grave, the place or

¹ "The place in which we see nothing." *Etymologicon Magnum*. *Sheol* seems to be derived from *shaal*, to dig, to search, to ask, to require; hence the noun formed from it, the deep, insatiable gulf, the all devouring, inexorable, and never satisfied pit of the grave. Compare Job xi. 8, x. 21, 22; Prov. i. 12, xxx. 16; Isa. v. 14; Cant. viii. 6. Such are the ideas connected with the word *sheol*, whose strict etymological

state of both good and wicked after death ; in Greek, *hades*, the obscure region mentioned in the New Testament. The word *hell*, like the terms *penance*, *priest*, *mystery*, has been falsified and perverted from its true meaning by Roman Catholicism, that mixture of Christianity and Paganism. In retaining the word *hell*, Protestants have preserved certain elements of the Roman Catholic idea. They believe, generally, in a place where the wicked shall be cast, not to be destroyed, but to suffer the torments of eternal fire, without relief or end, in the company of the devil and his angels, with rage in their hearts and curses on their lips.

THE BIBLE NOWHERE TEACHES THE INDESTRUCTIBILITY
OF THE HUMAN SOUL.

The traditional belief specified in the preceding pages takes for granted that the soul of man is absolutely imperishable. Now the Scriptures, though they teach us that all men are *capable* of immortality, speak nowhere of essential immortality apart from communion with Jesus, the Christ. The philosophic theory of the indestructibility of the human soul is utterly foreign to the religion of the Bible.¹

meaning is *an excavated subterraneous place* ; just as the English word *hell* is from the Anglo-Saxon *helan*, to cover, to hide. In German *Hoehle*, cavern, and *Hoelle*, hell. It might be translated *the under-world*.

¹ The word *soul* occurs more than sixteen hundred times in the Bible, but never in conjunction with the terms *immortal*

Not only does Scripture entirely abstain from using the expression "immortal soul," so constantly recurring in modern phraseology, but it repeats on every page, sometimes in one form of language and sometimes in another, that immortality is not a natural gift, but a something to be acquired; a privilege to be conferred upon the believer only; a prize to be gained after a brave and earnest struggle; that "God only hath immortality" inherently, and that eternal life is the special reward of those who "by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honor and immortality."¹ Would they have to seek for it if they possessed it as a birthright? According to Scripture, there is no permanent life, except for the believer: "He that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him,"² like the thunder-cloud before the thunder-bolt.

or *imperishable*. Nor do the Scriptures ever speak of the *eternal life of the wicked*. "The Bible, in this country, is an open book for every one. If man's natural immortality be *taught* there, surely it can be *shown*. T. N. has offered £1000, the author of 'Immortality only in Christ' £105, and myself £100, for ONE passage in proof of the popular creed. These offers have been published for months, but not one verse has been produced." *God Misunderstood*: by David Wardlaw Scott, p. 28. Kellaway and Co.; price 1s.

¹ Luke xiii. 24, comp. Matt. vii. 14; Rom. ii. 7; 1 Tim. vi. 12, 16.

² John iii. 36: "to see life" is simply "to live" in biblical language, in the same manner as "to see corruption" (Acts ii.

WHAT IS EVERLASTING PUNISHMENT?

It is true that Christ threatens the sinner with everlasting punishment. Those who have neglected His poor and afflicted brethren shall go away, He says, into everlasting punishment.¹ But, with regard to the word here translated "everlasting" and in the very same verse rendered "eternal," we must observe that, when it qualifies an act, eternity is not always the attribute of the act itself, but applies to the result of the act. Thus, in the Epistle to the Hebrews, Jesus is said to have obtained "eternal redemption," eternal in its results, although the act of redemption was accomplished in one day on the cross.² In the same epistle we read of "eternal judgment," where evidently the effects alone of the judgment are to be eternal.³ In the Epistle of St. Jude, Sodom and Gomorrha are quoted as permanent witnesses of Divine vengeance, the prey of

27) is "to become corrupt." The wrath of God only endures until it has accomplished its purpose. The words *eis ton aiona*, for ever, are not added, as when it is spoken of him who "doeth the will of God [and] abideth FOR EVER" (1 John ii. 17).

¹ *Kolasin aionion*: Matt. xxv. 46.

² Heb. vi. 2; ix. 12, *æternum valens*: Grimm, *Clavis* N. T., comp. ver. 25, 28, v. 9, vii. 25. "Eternal answers to once for all."—*Dean Alford*.

³ Heb. vi. 2. A somewhat similar expression is found in Mark iii. 29. This rhetorical figure, which assigns to an act

“eternal fire.”¹ The waters of the Dead Sea cover the site of these guilty cities, but the fire which consumed them was eternal as to its effects, because it destroyed them for ever.² In the same way the “eternal” punishment spoken of in the above-quoted passage from St. Matthew is to consist in a gradual destruction, which will be irremediable. This use of the term is not unknown in modern phraseology. We find it in the expression “an eternal farewell,”³ meaning a last and solemn adieu. In a similar manner the punishment spoken of by Christ will be final and supreme. “May it not, in its measure, be reckoned an infinite punishment, should God please to doom man, who was by nature a candidate for immortality, to total annihilation, from whence he should never be suffered to return to life?”⁴

Our aim is not, therefore, as is generally supposed,

the perpetual duration of its effects, is also found in 1 Kings ix. 13: “And he called them the land of Cabul unto this day.” Deut. xi. 4: “The Lord hath destroyed them [the Egyptian army, horses, and chariots] unto this day.” Rev. xx. 2: “He laid hold on the dragon, . . . and bound him [for] a thousand years,” then cast him into the abyss, to remain there till the thousand years were finished.

¹ Jude 7.

² Compare Matt. xviii. 8, xxv. 41; Mark iii. 29; Dan. xii. 2.

³ *Æternum vale*.—Ovidius.

⁴ Hermann Witsius (1636-1708), *Economy of the Covenants*, i. 42.

to limit the duration of eternal punishment; but rather to argue that it involves final destruction, in other words, an eternal deprivation of life, an eternal loss of existence.

THE ESSENTIAL CHARACTER OF ALL PUNISHMENT.

"These shall go away into everlasting punishment; but the righteous into life eternal."—*Matt.* xxv. 46

The etymology of the word *kolasis*, translated "punishment" in the usual version, may lead us to an apprehension of its intrinsic meaning. Lexicographers refer it to a root signifying "to break by striking, to amputate, to shorten, to dismember, to mutilate;"¹ from the said root our word *iconoclast*, "breaker or destroyer of images," is derived. *Kolasis* therefore denotes punishment involving a cutting off, a loss.

If we consider it carefully, all punishment implies

¹ Donnegan, Liddell and Scott, Passow, Planche, Alexandre, Wahl, Grimm, etc. *Kolazo*, the frequentative of *kolouo* (poetical): whence *kolasis*, mutilation; *kolos*, maimed. In the Septuagint the terms *kolasis* and *kolazo* are employed with reference to capital punishment, to banishment, to confiscation, or to imprisonment, all of which penalties imply deprivation. (1 Esdras viii. 24 [25]; compare Ezra vii. 26; Ezek. xviii. 30, in the Septuagint.) When the punishment does not involve loss, as when it consists in the infliction of blows, the Septuagint and the New Testament use the word *paideia*, admonitory correction (2 Chron. x. 14; Prov. iii. 11, xxii. 15; Luke xxiii. 16; Heb. xii. 6, 7), or the words *epitimia*, *elengxis*, *ekdikesis*.

more or less of deprivation and loss. A fine consists in loss of money ; imprisonment in loss of liberty ; death in loss of life. This is equally the meaning of the Latin term *castigare*, the etymological sense of which is *to prune, to lop away* ; and of the English word *chastise*. It is to cut off the unfruitful branches ; “*Castigatio : amputatio quæ arboribus luxuriantibus adhibetur*,” according to the definition of Stephen’s “Thesaurus” ; the operation mentioned by Jesus Himself in the parable of the Vine and the branches : “I am the true Vine,” He said, “and My Father is the husbandman. Every branch in Me that beareth not fruit He taketh away : and every branch that beareth fruit, He purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit. . . . If a man abide not in Me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered ; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned.”¹ The wicked are pruned away for ever from the trunk of humanity, to be consumed ; and their destruction shall be complete and final. Such is everlasting punishment.

According to the Bible, life is a sacred trust, which God withdraws from those who abuse it. The Creator forces no one to remain seated at the banquet of life. He grants immortality to the right-

¹ John xv. 1, 2, 6.

eous ; but those who seek to alter the conditions of their being exclude themselves from its possession. They attempt what is impossible. They might as well try to square the circle. They cannot destroy immutable laws ; but they may make their liberty the instrument of their ruin. Man's future and permanent existence depends on spiritual well-being ; as his present existence depends on physical health. The ultimate death of the body and soul of the unregenerate follows that of the body in the first death with more or less rapidity. The rust which eats into the scabbard must finally corrode the sword. There will be no useless torments, but simply the gradual destruction of an individuality which falls back into the nonentity whence Divine goodness called it forth : a terrible agony, then a night without a dawn. The soul will perceive and act no more. Once it lived and loved, but now it feels no longer ; it is dead, passed away forever.

Thus we find in theology the same law that governs Nature. The species which fulfill their destiny in accordance with the purpose of their Creator live and flourish ; the species that, for one cause or another, cease to improve with the change of their surroundings, die out and disappear. In the last century two bipeds of the same class vanished in this manner, the "dodo" of Mauritius and the "soli-

taire" of Roderique Island, clumsy, heavy birds, almost without wings; and in our own age we are witnessing the gradual extinction of certain inferior orders of the human race. We are, all of us, only in the position of candidates for immortality, and, from a certain point of view, *election* may be regarded as *selection*, largely qualified by individual liberty. In the spiritual, as in the physical world, progress is secured through elimination. The gospel warns us that many are called, but few are chosen; that many are bidden to the feast of immortality, but that comparatively few accept the invitation. Observation convinces us that only a comparatively small number of the beings and germs of nature come to full development, and perpetuate their race.

Thus the gospel and universal analogy teach us, with one accord, that the gift of life is conditional, "that the world produces a vast harvest of human beings, some of whom voluntarily sink to the level of the brutes that perish, while others prepare for a higher existence."¹

¹ Mr. Charles Lambert, epitomized by Prevost-Paradol. See on this subject the remarkable thoughts contained in the Fourth Book of Esdras, viii. 41, ix. *passim*, and various passages from the Wisdom of Solomon, which seem to foreshadow what truth there is in Darwin's theory,—*Struggle for life; The survival of the fittest*. "Those varieties which are least competent to cope with surrounding conditions will infallibly give way to those that are most competent."—*Prof. Tyndall*.

The Bible speaks of "endless justice," "endless life," "everlasting joy," but "endless woe," "eternal torments," "everlasting misery," are expressions which, in common with the terms "deathless" or "immortal soul," are never found in the Sacred Text in reference to men or any other living creatures.

SUFFERING NOT THE ESSENCE OF PUNISHMENT.

But how are we to answer those sage objectors who, believing themselves wiser than the Word of God, are scandalized at the leniency of punishment which does not consist in eternal tortures? Perhaps we may suggest that they are misled by the traditional notion of punishment. It is a mistake to think that punishment necessarily involves pain. Let a slight fine be inflicted upon a delinquent millionaire, and he will have been punished, although, instead of suffering, he may smile at the trifling loss. Pain may, or may not, accompany punishment, and in itself is often a blessing.¹ Like

¹ As instances of punishment without pain, we may quote the English law which condemned the suicide to an ignominious burial in the highway, with a stake driven through the body, and without Christian rites; also the custom prevalent in certain North American States, of rendering criminals insensible by chloroform before their execution. Even without chloroform, beheading and hanging are far less painful and terrible than many so-called natural deaths. If the essence of punishment were suffering, fifty lashes of the cat-o'-nine-tails would be a graver penalty than death on the scaffold, and

a vigilant sentinel, it guards both the child in its cradle and the soldier on the battle field. It rouses them, prompts a cry for help, and thus indirectly procures necessary aid. It is, at the same time, the rod of the Divine Shepherd and the providential tocsin which warns the sinner of impending danger. If any rash individual attempted to gaze at the sun, he would first experience intense pain in his eyeballs. Should he disregard the admonitory voice of suffering, and persevere, the pain would cease; but he would have become blind. The loss of sight would be his punishment, and not the temporary anguish that forewarned him of the consequences of his folly.

The utter destruction of the human being will doubtless be preceded by pain, which, in length and intensity, will be proportionate to his individual vitality. Greater and more protracted suffering must accompany the dissolution of a soul which is more richly endowed and possesses more vital strength than another. In this sense, "unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall much be required."

murderers should be made to endure tortures proportionate to the number and atrocity of their crimes. Nevertheless, the law recognizes but one punishment for murderers of every degree of guilt, viz., loss of life. Must our theology, which ought to guide our legislators, stoop to learn from them lessons of Divine wisdom?

But what we dispute is, that suffering forms the main part of the punishment threatened in the Bible.¹

We must remember that Paul, the most dogmatic of the apostles, who affirms that he had not "shunned to declare all the counsel of God,"² never, in his most solemn warnings, uses any expression that might seem to imply the eternal torments of the lost. He appears carefully to avoid any simile that could afford the slightest ground for such a doctrine. He never speaks of hell but he has tears for the perishing ones, "whose end is destruction."³

SYMBOLS AND HYPERBOLES OF THE APOCALYPSE.⁴

With regard to the symbolic and hyperbolic language of the Apocalypse, let us first observe that

¹ Such was also the opinion of the eminent Rothe. According to his view, the duration of the sufferings of a soul would be proportioned to its guilt, and its guilt to the amount of the Divine element within it. The larger the building, the more intense the fire; mighty is the ruin of the mighty soul; the amount of pain perceived must be proportionate to the powers lost by the sinful individual. Let us add that the law of analogy leads us to believe that the same rule will prevail in a future state as on earth, where we usually see pain shortened in proportion to its intensity. "The goodness of God is seen even in His punishments." (Clement of Alexandria, *Strom.* vi., chap. xxv., §156.)

² Acts xx. 20, 27. See "*Pauline Theology*," by H. L. Hastings.

³ 2 Cor. iv. 3, Greek; Phil. iii. 18, 19. See Objection xxii.

⁴ Rev. xiv. 10, 11; xix. 3, 20; xx. 10.

all its figures relating to the fate of the wicked are borrowed from the Old Testament, where they are employed to depict earthly and transitory phenomena. Thus we read, in the thirty-fourth chapter of Isaiah, that "the streams" of Idumæa shall "be turned into pitch, and the dust thereof into brimstone"; Bozrah, its capital, shall "not be quenched night nor day; the smoke thereof shall go up for ever."¹ Also, at the end of the seventeenth chapter of Jeremiah it is said that, if the Jews will not hallow the sabbath day, by not bearing any burden on that day, and not allowing any to enter in at the gates of Jerusalem, the Lord "will kindle a fire in the gates thereof, . . . and it shall not be quenched."² The same expression is found in the last verse of the prophecies of Isaiah, which we quote in full: "They shall go forth, and look upon the carcasses of the men

¹ Ver. 10. *Lailah veioman lo ticbeh, leolam iaaleh ashanah*. Isaiah had before his mind the calamity which, twelve centuries before, had overwhelmed the neighboring country and cities of Sodom and Gomorrha. See Gen. xix. 28.

² In the same manner the Lord, threatening Israel, declares that His "wrath shall not be quenched" (2 Kings xxii. 17; Is. i. 31; Jer. iv. 4, vii. 20, xxi. 12; Ezek. xx. 47; Amos v. 6). Yet the punishments here threatened were only national and temporary, and we read elsewhere that the anger of the Lord "endureth but a moment," and that He doth not "keep His anger for ever." (Ps. xxx. 5 [6]; comp. Ps. ciii. 9; Mic. vii. 18.)

that have transgressed against Me : for their worm shall not die, neither shall their fire be quenched ; and they shall be an abhorring unto all flesh " Here again it is a question of temporal punishment. Life, and therefore sensation, have departed from these bodies ; but, deprived of the honors of burial, their flesh becomes the loathsome prey of corruption ; and the skeletons which remain are consumed by flames. Thus shall the last traces of the enemies of the Lord vanish for ever.¹

And thus, Christ says, men who disobey My voice shall perish. It shall not be in their power, nor in the power of any creature, to quench the fire which has already begun its devouring ravages.²

If we read the warnings of Scripture with the pre-

¹ We are indebted to our friend M. Felix Bovet for the remark that the concluding verse of Isaiah seems to be a development of the last verse of the first chapter, the latter being, so to speak, a preface to the whole book : "The strong shall be as tow, and his work as a spark ; and they shall both burn together, and none shall quench them." It is difficult to extinguish tow, but nothing burns more rapidly. The simile would therefore be inappropriate to represent perpetual suffering. This applies to all other Scripture symbols referring to the fate of the wicked, such as *chaff, briars, vine branches, bundles of tares, stubble, thorns, fat of lambs*.

² Mark ix. 47. These words of Jesus are a quotation from Isaiah lxvi. 24, and can only be understood to imply eternal suffering when the soul's inherent immortality is assumed as a fact.

conceived idea that they foretell eternal torment, the various expressions contradict each other ; they speak sometimes of flames, sometimes of profound darkness ; sometimes of wailing, and sometimes of dead silence ;¹ while, on the contrary, they all agree in describing a fearful agony, after which neither perception nor activity will remain. This also seems to be depicted in the parable of the guest without a wedding garment, who was bound hand and foot and cast into the outer darkness, his activity and perception being thus symbolically brought to a close.²

In the last chapters of Revelation "death and hell are consumed and destroyed ; all evil things vanish one by one, leaving only life and blessedness behind. How different is this view of the future from that which is conjured up by the false wisdom of men !" We here quote M. Louis Bonnet, a favorite commentator, who adds : "What wealth of hope and consolation lies in the prospect which the Word of God unfolds before us !" ³

¹ 1 Sam. ii. 9 ; Ps. xxxi. 18, cxv. 17 : *dumah*, the stillness of death.

² Matt. xxii. 13.

³ Rev. xx. 14. *Commentaire sur le Nouveau Testament*, p. 890.

THE ORTHODOXY OF THE APOSTOLIC FATHERS.

We shall now try to meet some objections urged by those, who, for obvious reasons, shrink from a discussion of this subject on a purely Biblical basis. The doctrine is new, they say, and opposed to the general belief of the Church.

It is worthy of remark, in the first place, that the doctrine of eternal torment is found neither in the Apostles' nor the Nicene creeds, nor in two of the principal confessions of faith of the sixteenth century, viz., the otherwise rigid creed of the French Reformed Churches, and the Thirty-nine Articles of the Anglican Church.¹ And we believe that even if this dogma has been handed down throughout the

¹ It is a curious fact that the confession of faith of the Anglican Church formerly contained the more symmetrical number of forty-two articles, two of which implicitly asserted the immortality of the soul and the eternity of future suffering. But in 1562 Convocation, under the presidency of Archbishop Parker, was wise enough to suppress these unscriptural tenets. Since then, the official authority of the Church has declared that the doctrine of an eternal hell is not an established dogma. See the letter from Rev. H. S. Warleigh, rector of Ashchurch, Tewkesbury, to Mr. Griffith, Congregational minister, *Eastbourne Gazette*, of 22nd February, 1871, and the pamphlet entitled, "Hear the Church of England, which is proved to have expelled from her Articles the dogma of endless torments," by the same: London, 1872. We limit ourselves to the following quotation: "No longer ago than 1864, the question was tried by the Judicial Committee whether endless torments was a doctrine of our Church or not. In the case

Protestant Churches, it is simply as an inheritance from the errors of the middle ages, and from the speculative theories of Platonism.¹

If we examine the writings of the earlier Fathers, Barnabas, Clement of Rome, Hermas, Ignatius, Polycarp, Justin Martyr, Theophilus of Antioch, Irenæus, and Clement of Alexandria, we find them all faithful to the apostolic doctrine of the final de-

'Wilson v Fendall' it was argued on both sides by most able counsel, and after mature deliberation the Lord Chancellor gave judgment that it was not a doctrine of the Church of England, 'for,' remarked his lordship, 'to affirm it was so would be reinstating the expelled Article, which we have no power to do.'" It should be specially remarked that this verdict was given with the approval of the two archbishops. An account of the judgment may be found in the report of the *Law Times* for February 20, 1874. Even the Church of Rome has preserved some traces of the ancient truth. According to an explanation given to us by one of her priests, she admits a distinction between the punishment of loss and the punishment of suffering (*pæna damni et pæna sensus*): the first must be eternal, consisting in exclusion from the presence of God; the second need not be so. Is not this, in somewhat ambiguous terms, the same doctrine that we advocate: torment, ending in absolute extinction?

¹ "The Reformers were so thoroughly absorbed in fighting for the points of belief which separated them from the Romish Church, (chiefly the supreme authority of the Scriptures, and justification through faith,) that they did not stay to examine any doctrines which were beyond the scope of these all-engrossing subjects, and which did not afford matter for the fierce controversies of the period."—*Edmond de Pressensé, Essai sur le dogme de la Redemption*, p. 23.

struction of the wicked. The dogma of everlasting torment did not creep into the Church until she yielded to the influence of Platonic philosophy. Plato had said, The soul is immortal, indissoluble ; and his assertion outweighed the denial of the apostles and prophets. The utterances of Paul and John were construed in a Platonic sense. The apocryphal author of the "Clementines" is the first among ecclesiastical writers who thus diverged from the primitive faith. Nevertheless, in some passages he contradicts himself, by declaring that the soul will be finally consumed in the flames of hell.¹ Then came Athenagoras. His chief aim was to show the fundamental agreement of the doctrine of Jesus with that of Plato, his former master ; but he refrains from quoting Scripture on the subject of the pretended indestructibility of the soul. Justin Martyr has been cited as a defender of the doctrine which we oppose ; but although he sometimes adopts the Platonic mode of expression, a careful study of his writings will show that he only admitted a relative immortality, a more or less lengthened survival of the soul after death.²

¹ *Homily III.*, chap. vi., Antwerp edition, 1698.

² See especially his last work, entitled *Dialogue with the Jew Trypho*, p. 158, Paris edition, 1615. For an adequate and conclusive inquiry into the testimony of the Fathers, our

THE COMMON ORIGIN OF PURGATORY AND AN
ETERNAL HELL.

Two natives of the burning plains of Africa, Tertullian and Augustine, were foremost in procuring a victory for these anti-biblical views. Not understanding Hebrew, Tertullian appealed to the account of the creation of Adam for proof of the immortality of the soul;¹ then, conscious that he had failed to establish his theory, he quoted the revelations of his sister, who had visions. According to him, hell is a *perpetual slaughtering*, "*æterna occisio*," a scene of mortal agony without the release of death.

This extreme doctrine provoked the equally extreme reaction of Origen. He represents hell as a kind of purgatory, where men and devils are purified, and whence they go to enjoy the blessedness of saints at the right hand of God.

readers are referred to *The Duration and Nature of Future Punishment*, by the Rev. Henry Constable; *The Perishing Soul*, by T. M. Denniston; *A New Bible*, by Rev. S. Minton; *Debt and Grace*, by Professor Hudson; and the standard book, *Life in Christ*, by Rev. Edward White.

¹ Even in our own days these feeble weapons are employed. But the term *living soul*, *nephesh chaiyah*, is applied in Genesis to fish and all kinds of animals as well as to man (Gen. i. 20, 21, 24, 30, ix. 10). Such is the case in the New Testament with regard to the word *psuche*, usually translated *soul* (see Rev. xvi. 3). As to the famous *nishmath chaiyim* of Gen. ii. 7, it is the panting sound of respiration, from *nasham*, to pant, to snort, to sob. See *The Hebrew National* for 19th

The Church contrived to preserve both these heresies ; she kept the endless tortures of Tertullian for heretics and apostates, and the purgatory of Origen for the majority of the faithful. The idea of inherent immortality flattered human vanity, by in some sort identifying our nature with absolute and necessary existence, and purgatory became a source of honor and emolument to the clergy. The system of indulgences grew up upon this basis. A well-paid priest could despatch to heaven any deceased relative whose salvation was a matter of doubt to his affectionate survivors.¹ Arnobius and Athanasius were the last defenders of the primitive faith.

July, 1867: "The Midrash (Bereshith Rabba, chap. xii.) does certainly enumerate five appellations of the human spirit met with in Scripture ; but these alike designate the principle of life in man and in beast. For that spiritual essence which exclusively is the portion of man, the Hebrew language affords no term." According to the Talmud, the soul of the wicked perishes by gradual decay. The "breath in man's nostrils," the above mentioned *nishmah*, is used in Scripture as expressing weakness and mortality (Gen. vii. 22; Isa. ii. 22). The *breath* or *spirit of God* creates the myriads of solar systems, and gives life to all created beings, including animals (Ps. xxxiii. 6. civ. 29, and following verses). Twelve times is the term *nephesh*, usually translated *soul*, employed as a synonym of *corpse* ; and in 1 Cor. xv. 45, the apostle contrasts the *living and mortal soul* of the first man with the "quickening spirit" of the last Adam.

¹ Hence the familiar proverb: "*The fire of purgatory boils the monk's saucepan.*"

The abuse became so odious and so gross that at length it gave rise to the Reformation of Luther.

Since that time, the Roman Catholic Church has become more prudent, and it is not very long ago that, at a Paris Conference, Mgr. Chalandon, Archbishop of Aix, advised the clergy to avoid preaching upon hell. "This question," he said, "will rather repel men's minds from the faith than win them to accept it." The comparative mildness of purgatory no longer sufficing, modern preachers have "so greatly widened the conditions of salvation that the doctrine of the *few* that are *saved* is replaced by that of the *few* that are lost."¹

DO THE MAJORITY OF CHRISTIANS REALLY HOLD THE TRADITIONAL DOCTRINE?

It is a fact that the doctrine of eternal torment is now becoming more or less undermined throughout Protestant Churches, both in America and abroad. "The persuasion is general that things are not so bad as they are commonly represented to be; that in some way or other, through the mercy of God, punishment will not be inflicted."²

¹ Charles de Remusat, *La Vie Future*; *Revue des Deux Mondes*, 15th June, 1865.

² *The Destiny of the Human Race*. By Henry Dunn, Vol. II., p. 586. A second edition has been published in one volume, 1872.

Dr. Macleod, late chaplain to the Queen, expressed himself as follows: "It does appear to me that there exists a widespread callousness and indifference, an ease of mind, with reference to the fate hereafter of ungodly men, which cannot be accounted for, except on the supposition that *all earnest faith is lost* in either the dread possibilities of future sin or of its future punishment."¹

Mr. Henry Dunn, who quotes these words, adds: "Even of professed believers, the sad truth must be told, that few attempt to *realize* the awful condition in which mankind are supposed to be placed; that *many* shrink from ever hinting danger to their nearest and dearest unconverted relatives; and that *some*, it is to be feared, compromise with conscience for the absence of a life in the spirit of their creed, by violent speculative denunciations on those who oppose it. The great multitude, in the meantime, live on and pass into eternity, devoid of every sentiment of anxiety in reference to the world that is to come; the popular theology being, we fear, but too truly expressed in an epitaph we have seen somewhere, written upon the tombstone of a notoriously abandoned man, who was killed by a fall while hunting:

‘Between the stirrup and the ground
He mercy sought and mercy found.’”

¹ *Parish Papers*, chapter on Future Punishment.

Who indeed pictures his father or his child always and for ever burning in unquenchable flames?

In the pulpit, vague doubts seem to arrest the preacher. He hesitates; and by reserve, irresolute statements, or even assumed vehemence, he betrays a secret want of conviction, which spreads among his hearers, disturbing the believer and hardening the unconverted sinner. The illustrious John Foster wrote, more than thirty years ago: "A number (not large, but of great piety and intelligence) of ministers within my own acquaintance, several now dead, have been disbelievers of the doctrine in question; at the same time, not feeling themselves imperatively called upon to make a public disavowal, they were content with employing in their ministrations strong general terms in denouncing the doom of impenitent sinners."¹

This question has of late created a division in the English branch of the Evangelical Alliance, fourteen members of the Council having retired in order to protest against the views of their colleague Mr. Birks. When the society was founded, in 1846, the same point had already been much discussed. "'It is notorious,' said the organ of the Wesleyan Meth-

¹ To Mr. Edward White, Sept. 24, 1841. *The Life and Correspondence of J. Foster*, edited by J. E. Ryland, 1852, vol. ii. p. 232.

odists, 'that many, whose orthodoxy on other points has never been questioned, are unbelievers on this. Some evade inquiry as unprofitable. Others preach the doctrine of eternal remorse, and consider future punishment to consist, not so much in any direct infliction by the hand of God, as in the natural working out of confirmed depravity.' Others we know go much further, and hold that eternal punishment is but a diminution of eternal joy in a state of salvation. The lowest order of happiness in heaven, say they, and the lightest suffering of hell, may, for aught we know, touch each other."¹

We have been able to verify the truth of these statements by personal observation. We have had many conversations with brethren in the ministry, and the result has most frequently been: "The view which you advocate may be the true one, but it may be dangerous to utter it; beware of preaching it."

TRUTH IS OUR BEST FRIEND.

We appeal to all ministers of the gospel: Is this a question of prudence? Is not eternal truth at stake? Are there any inopportune truths in the gospel? And are we not directed to declare all the counsel of God? Besides, regarding it from the most practical point of view, will not this doctrine,

¹ H. Dunn, *Op. Cit.*, p. 590.

which we believe to be the true one, be more effectual in our hands than any other? By clearness and distinctness in our statements, full conviction on the part of the preacher, and the announcement of a punishment which, though not revolting, is terrible, and scriptural, and rational besides, a far deeper impression will be produced than by the maintenance of a theory which no one can thoroughly believe, and which almost every one privately softens down after his fashion ; for exaggerations of doctrine are like those barriers that are too lofty for horses to leap, and which they quietly pass under.¹

The scriptural doctrine, as we have felt constrained to declare it here, removes, we believe, a great stumbling-block from the path of believers. We are no longer compelled to conceive of a God possessing two different natures : on earth tender and beneficent, even repaying man's ingratitude and wickedness by His mercies ; but beyond the tomb unmoved by the endless torture and excruciating pain of His enemies. We read with horror the stories of the Inquisition, or the relation of the conquest of Mexico by the Spaniards ; of the Emperor

¹ "Certainty and wholesome strictness, not amounting to absolute barbarity of punishment, have been assumed to act as material deterrents from the commission of serious crime."—*The Daily Telegraph*, London, December 2, 1874.

Montezuma broiled on a gridiron over a slow fire ; of the men tortured and driven mad by drops of water falling day and night upon their forehead ; but what are these agonies of a few days or hours, hideous and revolting as they may be, in comparison with a scorching fire which, after millions of ages, shall only have begun its work !

“No man can deny that God is able to destroy what He was able to create. No man can deny that God had a power to choose whether He would inflict death upon the sinner, or an endless life of agony. Which would He choose, the gentler or the more fearful doom ? Will you say the latter ? Why ? There must be a reason. Is it to please Himself ? He repudiates this kind of character (Ezek. xviii. 23). Is it to please His angelic or redeemed creation ? They are too like Himself to take pleasure in such a course. Is it to terrify from sin ? To terrify whom ? Not the lost ; they are handed over forever to blasphemy and evil. Is it then to terrify the unfallen, and preserve them from sin ? Would it ? What is sin ? Is it not pre-eminently *alienation from God* ? What would alienate from Him so completely as the sight or the knowledge of such a hell as Tertullian taught ? Pity, horror, anguish, would invade every celestial breast. Fancy a criminal with us. He has been a great criminal : let him be the

cruel murderer, the base destroyer of woman's innocence and honor, the fiendish trafficker in the market of lust, the cold-blooded plotter for the widow's or the orphan's inheritance ; let him be the vilest of the vile, on whose head curses loud, deep, and many have been heaped. He is taken by the hand of justice ; all rejoice. He is put to death ! No ; that is thought too light a punishment by the ruler of the land. He is put into a dungeon ; deprived of all but the necessities of existence ; tortured by day and by night ; guarded lest his own hand should rid him of a miserable life ; and all this to go on till Nature thrusts within the prison bars an irresistible hand, and frees the wretch from his existence. Now what would be the effect of such a course upon the community ? The joy of the criminal's overthrow, once universal, would rapidly change into pity, into indignation, into horror, into the wild uprising of an outraged nation to rescue the miserable man from a tyrant worse than himself, and to hurl the infamous abuser of law and power from his seat. And this is but the faintest image of what a cruel theology would have us believe of our Father which is in heaven ! Nature steps in, in the one case, and says there shall be an end. Omnipotence, in the other, puts forth its might to stay all such escape. *For ever and ever !* Millions of years of agony

gone, and yet the agony no nearer to its close! Not one, but myriads, to suffer thus! Their endless cries! Their ceaseless groans! Their interminable despair! Why, heaven and earth, and stars in their infinite number, all worlds which roll through the great Creator's space, would raise one universal shout of horror at such a course. Love for God would give way to hatred. Apostasy would no longer be partial, but universal. All would stand aloof in irrepressible loathing from the tyrant on the throne, for a worse thing than Manicheism pictured would be seated there—*the one eternal principle would be the Principle of Evil.*"¹

And let no one say that the prospect of the death of souls is likely to cool the zeal of the preacher or the missionary. What! do we not see physicians lavishing all their skill and energy in order to prolong the life of their patients for a few years, or only a few days? Do we not call men heroes who brave fire or water to save their fellow creatures from a fate far less terrible than eternal death? And is it likely that we should be indifferent to the perils which menace the life of both the body and the soul of our kin? The true believer dreads, for all

¹ *The Duration and Nature of Future Punishment*, by the Rev. H. Constable, Chaplain to the City of London Hospital. Fifth edition, pp. 309, 310.

humanity, a danger which he fears not for himself ; he knows that unless he labor with all his might their blood will be upon his head ; he knows that the ravages of the invisible disease are incurable, that the tide is rising, that the flames are spreading ; does he need to know more in order to enkindle his zeal, and to keep the sacred love for souls burning in his breast ?

SECOND ESSAY.

Universal Salvation.

FROM THE POINT OF VIEW OF FACULTATIVE
IMMORTALITY.

As its name clearly indicates, the doctrine of universal salvation supposes that all men, without exception, will arrive, sooner or later, at eternal felicity. This seductive hypothesis has taken various forms and names. It has been called in turn Origenism, from the name of him who first developed the system; Apocatastasis or Restitutionism, by which is meant the re-establishment of all things; and, finally, Universalism. According to Littré's Dictionary, Universalists believe that "men are saved whatever their religious opinions may be"; but absolute Universalism goes so far as to affirm that every man whatsoever, even though a stranger to all religion and all morality, will be finally reclaimed to happiness and heaven. According to the statement of an adept in this system, "It is not possible for a man not to be saved."

Believing this doctrine to be without solid foundation in philosophy, anti-biblical, and dangerous, it will be our aim to set forth some of the reasons upon which our conviction is founded.

Like the traditional dogma, the doctrine in question has for its philosophical basis the Platonic theory of the absolute native immortality of every human soul; a preconceived idea which has been exalted into an axiom. The baneful influence of this opinion on Christian theology proves the danger of *a priori* metaphysics, and the wisdom of the apostles when they put the first disciples on their guard against all philosophies, including that of Plato. Aside from revelation, there is room, it would seem, only for a system which, like that of Kant, declares itself incompetent in the domain of metaphysics and rests solely upon the incontestable facts of sensible experience or of the moral consciousness.¹

It may be admitted, however, that, among the philosophers of antiquity, if we must choose, the founder of the Academic school presents exceptional claims. There were in this man the sublime aspira-

¹ "The problem of Immortality lies therefore outside of the circle of theoretical philosophy." *Some Problems of Philosophy*, by Archibald Alexander, Professor of Philosophy in Princeton College. 1886, page 82. (C. H. O.)

tions of a "fallen deity with memories of heaven." He is more in sympathy with us than Epicurus who denied all survival of the soul, an Aristotle who hardly ever alludes to the subject, or even an Epictetus who admitted only the survival of the just. Plato teaches also the survival of the wicked, either in view of their amendment, or in view of penalties without end reserved for great criminals. In his recognition of a recompense of evil as well as of good in the life to come, Plato approaches the teaching of the Bible ; but he goes beyond it in his dogma of native and inamissible immortality, a doctrine strange and even diametrically contrary to the spirit as well as to the letter of Holy Scripture. We repeat, then, the old adage : "*Amicus Plato sed magis amica veritas.*" While admiring the philosopher, we should beware of his system as of a machine whose wheels would crush any one so unfortunate as to touch them even with the tip of a finger. The lamentable results of the Platonic doctrine may be seen in the theology of a Tertullian and an Augustine,—theology called orthodox,—which makes the God of love an Executioner whom innumerable victims will curse eternally. Such a doctrine is a burden even to its adherents. It has drawn from them admissions which we are bound to record. Henry Rogers declared that "for his part he would not be sorry

to see every child die at the age of four years." Albert Barnes admits, with a soul full of anguish, that he cannot understand why there are men destined to suffer forever. "The Gospel," says Isaac Taylor, "fills us with a universal sympathy which sometimes makes us regret that it must be true in all its teachings." Calvin himself cannot refrain from confessing that the decree of God concerning sinners seems to him horrible (*"decretum horribile fateor"*). In a word, the traditional dogma conducts to pessimism by making evil eternal. What has been the result? Extremes meeting, the doctrine of eternal suffering has led to Universalism. More or less secretly many of the partisans of the traditional dogma, unable to hold it any longer, have quitted their position, to embrace the hope of a universal salvation; while others wander in the penumbra of eschatological skepticism. The bastions of the orthodox citadel of an eternity of suffering show but here and there a sentinel; and soon, if they do not take care, the fall of the fortress will bury them in its ruins. But are the deserters entirely out of danger? We think not. There is, in our view, but one secure position. It is the Biblical dogma of facultative immortality. Do what we will, a forced immortality leads, both logically and theologically, to impossibilities. The example of Origen proves that

the intensest piety, the amplest learning, and the noblest genius, are unable to build any enduring structure upon the quicksands of human fictions.

Origen was born in the year 185, a quarter of a century after Tertullian. Like him, a child of torrid Africa, he had, like him, an ardent soul. Like him, he was a Platonist. Like him, in fine, he gave himself up to more than one eccentricity of doctrine. At first a literalist, even to fanaticism, he became, in the sequel, the great master of mystical interpretation. His intellect, so noble and so vast, lacked equilibrium. A blind leader of the blind, Plato had led Tertullian into a ditch. Origen saw Tertullian fall, but without duly considering the cause of this catastrophe, he took the hand of the same guide, and in his turn fell into a ditch quite as deep. The awful conceptions of Tertullian, who saw in every volcano a chimney of Gehenna, were to occasion a reaction not less excessive in Origen. The director of the Christian school at Alexandria, Origen sought to defend the faith against the Voltaires and the Rousseaus of that day; especially against Celsus, who had combated nascent Christianity with the weapons of argument and of ridicule. The doctrine of an eternal hell furnished a target for this redoubtable adversary. Celsus went so far as to declare "execrable" the God of the Christians, "whose re-

ligion," he said, "bewitches the minds of the simple with chimerical terrors." Such attacks provoked Origen to excess in the opposite direction. To the doctrine of an eternal hell he opposed with force the declarations of Scripture touching the suppression of evil and the pacification of the universe. Combining these promises of revelation with the preconceived opinion of an indefectible immortality, he naturally arrived at the conception of the final conversion of all sinners, even the most incorrigible, and of Satan himself.

But what are we to make, from this point of view, of the passages, so distinct, which speak of the destruction of the guilty? It is here that Origen calls to his aid the mystical interpretation. According to him, the sinner will not be destroyed; the sinner is indestructible. It is his *sin* which will be consumed in a baptism of fire. Hell, therefore, only retards more or less the entrance of its guests into heaven. It is, in fact, no longer hell, but simple purgatory; the vestibule, as it were, of the abodes of the blessed.

The mystical interpretation, patronized by Origen because his argument had need of it, became, as all must see, the pest of exegesis, from which the heroic efforts of the Reformers have not even yet completely delivered us. There are, without doubt,

passages of Scripture which ought to be taken figuratively ; but the rule obtains, nevertheless, that we are to *admit the metaphorical sense only where the literal is absurd*. Now, in the case before us, what is there absurd in supposing that a being which has had a beginning may also have an end ? Absolutely nothing. This is recognized in principle by philosophers and theologians, even by those who are Universalists, as we shall see further on.

Without becoming at any time the official doctrine, Origenism found numerous advocates, especially in the East. Among them may be mentioned Gregory Thaumaturgus, bishop of Neo-Cæsarea, who for eight years attended the lectures of Origen ; Pierius and Theognostus, successors of the latter in the school of Alexandria ; Pamphilus of Cæsarea, and the historian Eusebius, who also leaned toward Arianism ; Gregory of Nyssa, Diodorus of Tarsus, and Theodore of Mopsuestia.

In the West, the preponderant influence of Augustine prevailed over that of Origen, whose doctrine, more or less modified, appears again after the Reformation with Bengel in Germany, Bishop Newton in England, and the venerable Oberlin of Bande-la-Roche. We have named three of the most pious theologians of the last century. We must, therefore, acknowledge with Bishop Martensen that

“the doctrine of *apocatastasis* is not always born of levity, but sometimes of a human sentiment deeply rooted in the very essence of Christianity.” We find in this another reason for deploring that *a priori* philosophy which has too often misled the best of men. We may mention in Switzerland in the same epoch, Mademoiselle Huber of Geneva and Pastor Ferdinand-Olivier Petitpierre of Neuchatel. To the latter we owe a volume entitled *The Plan of God*. It was with reference to the controversy engaged in by Petitpierre that Frederick the Great, when appealed to by the Venerable Company of Ministers, replied: “If my honest and faithful subjects of Neuchatel insist upon being eternally damned, don’t let me stand in the way.” Petitpierre was obliged to go into exile. In spite of all his zeal, talent, and virtue, he left no disciples. The fault lay in his system, which conducted to a deadlock. In our day, Neander of Berlin, Tholuck of Halle, the prelate Von Kapff of Stuttgart, and Professor Maurice of London, have to a greater or less extent adopted the same doctrine. There is, however, a reserve to be made in the case of Tholuck. “Dogmatically,” he says, “I feel myself drawn toward Universalism, but exegetically, I can hardly justify this opinion.” In his work upon *The Word of God and the Foundation of the Faith*, Dr. Tait, the late

Archbishop of Canterbury, expresses the hope that, after the day of judgment, Divine Mercy will find in the infinity of ages some means of reclaiming lost souls without compromising His justice. On the other hand, the highest dignitary of the Anglican Church, after the Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr. Thomson, Archbishop of York, leans toward facultative immortality. Speaking of the wicked, he says: "Life, to them, must be a beginning of destruction, since nothing but God and that which pleases Him can permanently exist." According to a letter of Dr. Cazenove in *The Guardian*, it appears that Origenism, or at least a doctrine which approaches it, prevails at this moment in the order of the Jesuits; but how is it possible to examine a theology which shuns the daylight of publicity?

Returning to Protestantism, we recall furthermore Canon Farrar, whose works entitled *Eternal Hope* and *Mercy and Judgment* have provoked such lively interest in England. In the case of the author of a *Life of Christ* which has received the honor of thirty editions, one can readily imagine the scandal produced among the religious public when it was understood that this eminent pastor and theologian also rejected the dogma of eternal suffering. A sort of jury was impanelled by the editor of the *Contemporary Review*. Seventeen theologians or

philosophers of renown were invited to pronounce upon the question. Their responses appeared in three consecutive numbers of the *Review*. One of these numbers went through as many as seven editions. It is apparent that this discussion, although conducted during the preoccupation of the public mind with political matters, assumed the proportions of an event, proving at least that the subject appeared worthy of attention and that anathemas on the one side and supercilious disdain on the other are no longer in season. The cold water of dogmatic indifference will not be able to extinguish a fire so thoroughly kindled.

We sympathize to a great extent with the optimism of Dr. Farrar. To begin with, we also believe, and more positively than he, that there will be an *end of evil*. We derive profound consolation from the thought of a blessed day when sin shall be remembered only as a thing of the past. It cannot be denied that the Bible speaks of a final re-establishment of all things. Even the prophets of the Old Testament predict the establishment of the Kingdom of God in the whole world, and the renovation of the earth by righteousness. David declares that "all the ends of the earth shall . . . turn unto the Lord, and all the kindreds of the nations shall worship before Him." "Bless the Lord, all ye His works!"

“Let every thing that hath breath praise the Lord !” These are the closing words of the Book of Psalms. In the New Testament the expectation of the Psalmist is confirmed. It reveals the plan which, in his benevolence, God has formed of reuniting all things in Jesus Christ: “that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things on earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.” “It pleased God that in Christ all fulness should dwell; that through him He might reconcile all things to Himself by the blood of the cross.” “And when all things have been subjected unto Him, then shall the Son also himself be subjected to Him that did subject all things unto him, that God may be all in all.”

This category of passages, however, should not make us forgetful of the texts, more numerous still, which speak of the previous destruction of incorrigible sinners. *Exegetical truth is to be found only in a synthesis of these two equally categorical teachings.*

We admit then in the world of spirits, as in the visible universe, an end of evil by the gradual elimination of evil doers. Moral evil, which we define as voluntary return in the direction of not-being, will disappear, carrying with it into the abyss of destruction its most culpable victims. The final re-

establishment will be preceded by the voluntary death of many souls. Thus it is that in the analogy of nature a multitude of grains perish between the sowing and the reaping. Myriads of germs also and of eggs prematurely succumb ; multitudes, even of species, have disappeared in the evolutions of the globe. The harvest, however, will be rich and joyous ; God will be all in all, that is, in all those who shall have survived the destructive effects of sin ; in the saints, the escaped, the remnant of Israel, the remnant of Jerusalem, those "whose names are written in the Book of Life." This will be universal salvation for the survivors.

A second element of truth in the doctrine we are combating is, we believe, the hope which it affirms of a possible salvation in the life to come for a multitude of souls to whom the gospel message has not been delivered here below, or who have not been able to comprehend its meaning. The patriarchs and prophets of the old dispensation were saved under very imperfect conditions of knowledge. The apostle Peter speaks of a preaching of good-tidings to the dead. It would seem that the universal and final judgment cannot take place until every man has heard the gospel preached. The last chapter of the Apocalypse speaks of a tree beyond the grave "whose leaves shall be for the healing of the na-

tions," referring, apparently, to pagans and ignorant persons to whom God has not yet been revealed. The Reformer Zwingli taught that in every age God has had his own elect, even among idolatrous peoples. "In every nation he that feareth God and worketh righteousness is accepted of Him." "If," says Vinet, "any person without the knowledge of Jesus Christ, has felt the need of a Savior; has sought him; has, so to speak, virtually accepted him; that person would be in the state of a true believer and would reap the blessings of a true faith." In the words of M. F. Pillon, we believe in "a possible continuance of probation after this life for those who, not having destroyed in themselves the moral faculty and disposition, have thus preserved a germ of immortality." Jesus declares that blasphemy against the Holy Spirit is alone unpardonable. All who have not committed this sin may be pardoned, either in this life or in the life to come. This hope does not constitute for the sinner a pillow of security. To those occupying our standpoint, sin presents itself as a fire which devours, devastates, and finally destroys the soul. Senseless would he be who should allow his dwelling to burn, because he might forsooth have, later on, an opportunity of arresting the flames! Even though it find pardon, sin leaves ineffaceable traces. This thought imposes

a sufficient if not an all-powerful restraint. There is no panacea. God has not intended that any doctrine should have irresistible effect. But surely, if, apart from Christian love, there exist an effectual motive, it is the fear of that which is indelible in the consequences of sin.

Finally, we believe that the elect will have, as their mission in the future life, to carry on the work of universal pacification undertaken by Jesus Christ and by his church here below. The ignorant and the sickly ones to whom we have referred present themselves very naturally as the people of whom the elect will be the kings and priests, the physicians and spiritual leaders. Members of the body of Christ, disciples of the Savior, first-born of the new-creation, children of the first resurrection, they will have without doubt at the epoch of the second resurrection, younger brethren whose education may be confided to them. While we believe that these elements of truth find their proper, natural place in the views which we advocate, we are none the less thankful to our opponents for having maintained them at a time when the true Biblical teaching was seldom heard.

So much premised and conceded, we shall begin our refutation of Universalism with two preliminary criticisms.

In the first place we complain of *its relative novelty*. It does not appear in the history of doctrine until the beginning of the third century. Barnabas, Clement of Rome, Hermas, Ignatius, Polycarp, Justin Martyr, Theophilus of Antioch, Irenæus, all the first fathers of the church are Conditionalists. Not one of them taught Universalism. Merely the first slight traces of the doctrine are contained in the writings of Clement of Alexandria.

The *esoterism* of the Universalist doctrine likewise creates an unfavorable impression. Esoteric teaching is a secret doctrine which certain philosophers communicate only to a small number of adepts. Its character is opposed to the spirit of the gospel, which is intended to be preached upon the house-tops. "I protest," said the apostle Paul, "that I am pure from the blood of all men. For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God." Now, Universalism has always been more or less ashamed of itself, laboring, as it were, under a guilty conscience. Origen admitted that his doctrine "might be dangerous for the unconverted." He taught that "the doctrine of an eternal hell was a *salutary error*, eminently suited to alarm the sinner and to convert him." He even styled it "a pedagogic artifice which God employs for the education of novices." Again, he said that "if the people

were taught that the pains of hell will have an end, we should see larger numbers of men plunging into excesses from which fear had hitherto restrained them." The same esoterism is met with again in the exhortations of Bengel, who would not have any one preach publicly what he himself believed. Dr. Thomas Burnet spoke of his doubts only in Latin, and in covert expressions. Latin aside, it is often the same in the present day. Such a method, always repugnant to a sincere soul, it would be by no means easy to revive in an age of entire publicity. What is it which is most certain to spread among the public, and to impress itself upon their memory? Is it not just those points of doctrine which we pretend to withhold from their curiosity? The secrets which are whispered in the ear of all the world are not likely to be well kept. Universalism is timid and embarrassed, because, without acknowledging it, it has an innate sense of its own falsity. As we said in the beginning, it rests upon the most fragile metaphysical foundation; it does violence to the formal declarations of Scripture; and, finally, it is fruitful of dangerous consequences. Anti-rational, anti-biblical, and mischievous;—such Universalism appears to us to be. Let us study it successively under this threefold aspect.

I. UNIVERSALISM IS IRRATIONAL.

In a philosophical point of view, Universalism rests upon a ruinous foundation, because the native and absolute immortality of the human soul, far from being an axiom, is essentially a begging of the question. It throws dust in the eyes of the public when it appeals to a pretended universal consent. To say nothing of materialists and atheists, there are in the world five hundred millions of Hindus and Chinese who sincerely feel themselves not to be personally immortal.¹ At least one-half of the human family believe in and aspire to nothingness. The education which we have received from ecclesiastical tradition would lead us to let pass, without protest, the Platonic hypothesis of the indestructibility of human souls. Accept this, and Universalism will have free course; challenge it, look it in the face, ask for its title-deeds, and it will lose countenance, for title-deeds it has none. It has long made its way by force of audacity, but those who have critically examined it, have seen it vanish like a chimera. But in disappearing, it takes away from Universal-

¹ Strict or orthodox Buddhism teaches expressly annihilation without residuum: *nirupadhis esha nirvana*. Unorthodox Buddhism, like Brahmanism, limits itself to proclaiming for every individual the final loss of personal identity, a return to eternal unconsciousness.

ism its *raison d'être*. How can eternal felicity be attributed to creatures whose very existence is of limited duration? Impossible, unless by the adoption of Conditionalism. In opposition to compulsory immortality let us summon a few competent witnesses.

Kant, it may be said, has tested the metaphysical arguments in favor of personal, indefectible immortality, and has found them to be weak; the moral proof alone has weight, but that is far from sufficient to sustain, as a legitimate consequence, the doctrine of necessary and absolute immortality. In France, in our day, MM. Renouvier and Pilon have vigorously maintained and continued the work of the great logician of Königsberg. No one has refuted them. We may say as much of Dr. Rothe and Dr. Hermann Schultz in Germany, of Archbishop Whately in England, and of Professor Hudson in America. We may also cite the savant Lotze, whose loss Germany is deploring. According to this philosopher, "there is no necessity that the soul should be immortal. It possesses certain properties, but we have no guarantee that it will never lose them." In another passage Lotze asks, "where this right of substances is to be found in virtue of which things having once possessed reality must necessarily subsist forever." We are unable to see what reply can

be given to this question of one of Germany's most remarkable thinkers. The illustrious Professor Ulrici has expressed himself as follows: "We speak of *faith* in immortality, because it is plain that the question here cannot be one of *science* in the strict sense of the word." "Philosophically,"—and here it is a defender of native immortality (G. Godet) who speaks,—"the only guarantee of indestructibility for the soul would be that it always had been. And it was because this was felt by Plato that the dogma of pre-existence and that of immortality were in his view inseparable parts of one whole." But to pretend that the soul has always existed is Pantheism. As Professor Ernest Naville has written to us in a letter which he authorizes us to cite, "every doctrine which makes the soul immortal in virtue of its primitive essence is a veiled Pantheism. This to me is perfectly clear." To escape Pantheism, then, we must admit that, simple or not simple, atom or not atom,—these are hypotheses, —the soul is a creation of God. If the soul possessed an independent and absolute immortality, it would no longer be a creature, but would form a part of God himself. Even this position offers no guarantee of the survival of the individual as such. The admission of a Divine Creator implies that this Creator "always has power to send back

to nothingness that which he has called into being.”¹ The Spiritualists, among others, Descartes, and in our own day, M. Jules Simon and M. Charles Secretan, are convinced of this. But, without recurring to this possibility, is it not allowable to conceive of a creature who abuses his liberty to his own destruction? Without doubt the individual is a product of Divine Will, and the decrees of God are immutable; but it seems to us that they may at the same time be conditional. God was able to create a being in view of immortality and to subordinate this immortality to the free choice of the creature; the condition imposed in the decree thus becoming its immutable element.

After the philosophers come the *theologians*. We may quote the Dean of the Theological Faculty of Montauban, Prof. Bois, who says: “After all, what necessity is there that we should be immortal?” “Native immortality is a doctrine which philosophy and theology alike repudiate,” wrote Chevalier de

¹ “The immateriality of the soul has been brought as an argument of its immortality; and so far the argument will certainly hold, that what is immaterial has not in itself the principles of corruption as bodies have. But as whatever God created must depend upon Him for its continuance in being so we may suppose God to be guided by infinite wisdom in giving this immortality.”—Hancock, Boyle Lect. for 1706, in the folio collection of *Boyle Lectures*, London Ed. of 1737, Vol. II., page 218; II. 243 in edition of 1739.

Bunsen. The most orthodox Christians will hardly question the declaration of the venerable Prof. Gaus-
sen of Geneva : "It were temerity," he said, "to try,
as has so often been done, to establish the immor-
tality of the soul by arguments based upon its spir-
ituality." On the other hand, one of the chief of
liberal Protestantism, Pastor Gerold of Strasburg,
has recognized implicitly the same truth : "Those
only," he writes, "can be sure of immortality who
here below have laid hold on eternal life."

Not only is enforced immortality a gratuitous as-
sertion, it also contradicts *universal analogy*. All
about us in the world we behold a struggle for ex-
istence and the survival of the fittest. Be trans-
formed in order to live ! Such is the great law of
Nature. Such is also the great law of the gospel.
What, from this point of view, shall befall those
free beings who resist the required transformation
and, in lieu of progressing, recoil voluntarily and
obstinately toward animalism ? Evolutionary science
itself exhibits examples of retrogression in Nature,
degenerations, backward progress. Without cul-
ture, superior types revert to the primitive type.
The conscious being may revert toward the uncon-
scious, and in fact the sleep which takes possession
of each of us every day is like the daily menace of
this unconsciousness from which we have scarcely

emerged. "Man," wrote Edgar Quinet, "has the faculty of retrogression,—of falling below himself, of descending the steps which he has previously mounted. He may cease to be a man and resume his brutish estate. Is not this disorder the thing that we call *Evil*? . . . When thou doest evil, what doest thou? Thou dost re-enter the ages of the world in which conscience did not yet exist. Monstrous effort! to carry Nature back to ages which she does not wish to re-enter,—toward the time when conscience was wanting to the world. All Nature has labored dimly to lift itself to the level of the conscience of the truly virtuous man; the consummation and crown of the universe! When, therefore, man divorces himself from conscience, he casts himself down from the summit of being; he uncrowns the universe; he decapitates the work of ages. The earth groans at the deed." "Thus the essential tendency of evil, when left to itself,—to intensify, to accumulate, and perpetuate its own misery,—constitutes the weak point in all schemes of Universalism or Restorationism. Like so many optimist theories, the idea that all men will become good and be saved at last is opposed by the course of experience here. The hard facts of the present life are all against it, and how are we to judge of the future but by the present? Supposing even

that new influences of good were brought to bear upon the human will, who can 'estimate the hardening effect of obstinate persistence in evil, and the power of the human will to resist the law and repel the love of God?' Out of the very excess of love there sometimes comes a greater bitterness of hatred; out of the very light of good, a deeper darkness of evil. To assert, therefore, in the face of Scripture and experience, that 'all men will be saved,' is to make a very hardy assertion. About all such optimism there is a tinge of unreality. It may please the benevolent, but it can hardly satisfy the really thoughtful mind."¹

Will any one say that by forcible means God will constrain the most recalcitrant to return to Him? Probably not, since the supposition of such violence would be an outrage against Him who has made man for liberty. "Jesus regards sin as a malady of which he is the physician; as a progress toward destruction which he would arrest; as a decline which portends death, and which is, in itself, an anticipated death, out of which he would snatch the moribund."² Nothing is more true; but we would ask of what, in the eyes of Universalists, this death

¹ John Tulloch, D. D. *Cont. Rev.* April 1878.

² "*L'Esprit du Christianisme*," by A. Bouvier.

consists, in which the malady of sin ought logically to terminate. Let them tell us what they mean by this death. An absolute moral corruption? But if the corruption is absolute, there would be an arrest in the process of degradation; it would become stationary; a result contrary to the general analogy of things. In our view the corruption terminates in death, which is the cessation of life, and since it concerns individuals, it is the end of every function of the soul. It may not be agreeable to some to speak of annihilation, but the evidence is not to be ignored. It is evident that sin involves a "diminution of being"—"a decay." Logic requires the prolongation of the lines. Why may not this lessening of being, this moral corruption, go as far as to reduce one to zero? We may suppose, therefore, that the sinner reaches at last the confines of nonentity, and is brought down, if we choose so to conceive of the case, to the condition of latent existence of the primitive ovule. But of these primitive ovules multitudes every day are lost. Will any one say that God *owes* to each of these the expansion of a present and of an eternal life? If not, then why should He be any more required to furnish the conditions of a new vivification to beings who, after a first development, have voluntarily retrograded? May it not be said that a being which by the abuse of its liberty

has gone back to the unconscious state, has contracted a constitutional vice, a sort of evil bent, which would inevitably be manifested in a new unfolding, were its vital functions restored?

The Universalist will reply by questioning us in his turn: "Reason," he says, "teaches us that there is a Creator, all-powerful and all-wise. If sinners are to be finally destroyed, for what end did Divine Wisdom call them into existence?" We reply that God has not given existence to sinners, but to creatures capable of choosing good or evil. If it be admitted that man was created really free, we are required, it seems to us, to suppose with M. Secretan, that the Creator has voluntarily given over the power he had to prevent the use which this or that creature would make of his liberty. But God knew at least that the worst abuse of this prerogative would lead, not to the eternal torment, but merely to the suppression, of the guilty individual.¹ Supreme goodness could not but confer upon privileged creatures free choice as a supreme prerogative; but free choice involves the danger of an evil choice. The creature choosing evil, it will follow, according to the theory of necessary immortality, either that the creature will return to resipiscence,

¹ Cf. Gen. vi. 6. Ex. xxxii. 10, ff. Numb. xiv. 12, ff. Jer. xviii. 7, ff.

or else, growing more and more rebellious, it will become eternized in its disorder. God guards against the latter alternative by creating man at once immortalizable and mortal.¹ There are creatures who, under their proper and unique responsibility, proudly break the bond of love which should unite them to their Creator; creatures who prefer destruction to any dependence whatsoever. Compulsory immortality would restrict their liberty. It is worthy of God not to oblige to live forever beings whom no power can reclaim to the only reasonable conditions of existence. The force of logic has led a Roman Catholic author to the same conclusions: "Man," wrote Père Gratry, "being nothing of himself, not constituting his own principle, not having within himself the source of his life, but being obliged rather always to draw from his source and borrow his existence from God, if he separate himself from that source so as to have no source but himself, no other ground of support, it is clear that he is immediately exhausted, he decreases and declines toward nothingness. Here we have the whole question of life and death." "O mystery of liberty; it is possible for sinners steadfastly to resist the current of Divine love! They die straightway and

¹ *Dektikon amphoteron*. Theophilus of Antioch, *Ad. Autol.* II. 27.

they die forever ; for whence can his life come who derives it not from the heart of God? . . . Can it be possible that *every* use which is made of our liberty, whatever that use may be, will conduct us to the same end? The supposition partakes of the impossible." A great Protestant thinker is no less explicit. In a recent article, Prof. Secretan warns the sinner against "a tangential direction of being which would lead to exhaustion, extinction, annihilation." The following passages of the same author are more categorical still : "We derive our life from God. We can, by a voluntary act, cease thus to derive it, and continue an apparent life by consuming that substantial element which we received at the beginning, and exhausting the quantity of force given us by the creative impulse ; but, in the illusion and torment of this isolated existence, we drain the resources of our being, we destroy ourselves. . . . As a result of his liberty, man has separated from its source his being derived from God, and is exhausting himself in slow agony." Is not the liberty of suicide which is permitted in the providence of this world, an analogy which intimates the possibility of a corresponding suicide of the soul ; a possibility which implies the doctrine of facultative immortality? "God has created all things in order that they may be," we read in the Book of Wisdom.

“He has made man *in view of* immortality, but sinners have made a compact with death ; they have called it their friend, and are so united to it that they have been consumed thereby.”¹

Certainly sinners have not been created to be destroyed ; nevertheless their destruction, and indirectly their original creation, will serve some end. The remembrance of their ultimate fate will offer itself as an awful barrier to the abuse of liberty in the future life. The smoke of the cities of the plain, whose black volumes Abraham witnessed from the heights of Mamre, inspired him with a salutary fear which he transmitted to his descendants. Thus Israel was saved, as a nation, from the abominable vices of Sodom and Gomorrha. In later times, the bitter remembrance of the first Captivity prevented a return to idolatry. In like manner the remembrance of the end of sinners, “the smoke” of which the Apocalypse speaks, must remain forever a testimony to the imprescriptible rights of Divine justice. “Their shame,” it is written, “shall not be forgotten.”²

Ever fertile in resources, Universalism borrows from the Platonic doctrine another subterfuge. This doctrine makes evil to reside not in the guilty will

¹ *Etakesan*, I. 14-16, II. 23, 24.

² Jer. xxiii. 40.

but in inert and innocent matter. Set free from the vile shackles of the body, the soul, like a white dove, will return to God in happy immortality. Death becomes a magical instrument of salvation; a warrant of impunity:

“What, then, is death? The breaking of the tie,
Th’ adult’rous marriage of the soul with earth.

* * * * *

This hateful union is the ground of evil;
Death, at once remedy and chastisement,
Not without effort breaks the horrid bond.
But at the moment when the tie dissolves,
The soul recovers her supremacy
Over the lower, baser elements,
And soars to sunshine of immortal life,
The world of bliss, of truth without alloy.”¹

Such is the doctrine which forms the basis of a good many funeral orations. It does not fail to reassure all the survivors. The profligate who dies without having given any indication of personal faith is, according to the expression of F. W. Robertson, “a son, more or less prodigal, who has set out for his father’s house.” Cannon Farrar cites this formula with unqualified approbation. Does it not involve grave error? There is too often lacking on the death-bed the moral element which characterized the return of the repentant son in the parable. To adopt this style of consolation is not to lay healing balm upon the broken heart, but to make a bad

¹ Lamartine, *La mort de Socrate*.

use of narcotics, and to forget that narcotics are poisons.

II. UNIVERSALISM IS UNSCRIPTURAL.

A begging of the question, a theory irrational in philosophy, native and inamissible immortality lifts its front against the most formal declarations of Holy Scripture. The Bible tells us, in so many words, and in a hundred different ways, that life is not immanent in ourselves.¹ It tells us that our immortality depends upon the tree of life; that an angel, flaming sword in hand, guards the approach to this tree; that we *are* not—that we have to *become*—“partakers of the Divine nature;” that God “only hath immortality.” The sacred writers exhaust their vocabulary in denouncing the total and awful end of the existence of sinners; so much so that one is at a loss to know in what stronger terms that doctrine could be expressed. The passages may be collated and the fact established. It has been recognized by two men placed at opposite extremes of the scale of belief: by M. Thomas Henry Martin, whose work, *La Vie Future*, received the approval of Pius the Ninth, and by Ernest Renan. “We unhesitatingly avow,” says M. Martin, “that the philosophical doctrine of the simplicity and im-

¹ John vi. 53.

mortality of the soul is nowhere found in Scripture." The following is the paraphrase of M. Renan upon the passage in which the apostle Paul treats of the punishment reserved for the impenitent:¹ "A great indignation, that is to say, a terrible catastrophe is shortly to come; this catastrophe will overwhelm all those whom Jesus shall not have delivered. . . . The unbelieving will be the prey of fire; their punishment will be an eternal death. Banished from the face of Jesus, they will be engulfed in the abyss of destruction. A destroying fire, in short, will be kindled to consume the world, with all those who shall have rejected the gospel of Jesus."²

¹ *Olethronaionion*, 2 Thess. i. 9. *Olethros*, a term specially employed by Plato to designate annihilation. Phædo, 37, 41, 44, 55, etc.

² *Saint Paul*, p. 248. We would translate, rather, "they will undergo their punishment: eternal—that is to say, final—destruction, from the presence of the Lord, and as an effect of his glorious power." Compare in the following chapter. "that wicked one whom the Lord shall slay with the breath of His mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of His coming." *Apo prosopou* indicate the efficient and present cause of their destruction; this is a hebraism which signifies often "in consequence of;" for example, in Ps. xxxviii. 5, "My wounds stink [*mipne hivvaleti*], because of my foolishness;" literally, *from the face of my foolishness*, and in the Septuagint: *Apo prosopou tes aphrosunes mou*. Already in the third verse of the same Psalm, we find two examples of the same form of speech with the same sense: "There is no soundness in my flesh because of thine anger," literally, *from the face of*.

This teaching is far removed from the purifying fire, from the *ignis sapiens*, and all the fantasies of Origen and the allegorists. The author whom we have just quoted often makes reference to the fact that "the first Christians were a thousand leagues away from those ideas of the immortality of the soul which were born of Greek philosophy." He shows that according to the New Testament, "all men die once, while sinners die twice; for, after the resurrection and the judgment, they will be plunged into nothingness."¹

M. Boutteville has remarked that "Jesus, in his doctrine of a future life, was far from accepting

"There is no more rest in my bones because of my sin," literally, also, *from the face of my sin*. See also Gen. vi. 13, Lev. ix. 24, Deut. xxviii. 20, Josh. v. 1, Neh. v. 15, Ps. lxxviii. 2. "Wax melteth before the fire;" not: *far from the fire*; one might almost render: *near to the fire*; Ps. lx. 6. Delitzsch remarks, concerning this verse, that "*miṣṣe* indicates the reason and the motive." Ps. lxxx. 16; Isa. x. 27; Jer. iv. 26. "All the cities were broken down at the presence of the Lord, and before his fierce anger." *Far from* his fierce anger would be a contradiction. Hosea x. 15. It is the same in the New Testament. Acts iii. 19, "the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord;" *far from his face* would be absurd. In 2 Thess. i. 9, the notion of "power" is justifiably employed in view of a work of destruction; there would have been no reason for using it with reference to a mere *separation*, especially since the separation exists already through the fact of the sinner's revolt.

¹ *Anti-Christ*, page 364; *Marcus Aurelius*, p. 505, et seq.

the Platonic or Cartesian notion of the immortality of the soul." The savant Olshausen, Professors Nicolas of Montauban and Vuilleumier of Lausanne, arrived at the same conclusion. We may mention, in addition, a commentator of the highest estimation in the camp of evangelical orthodoxy, Pastor Bonnet of Frankfort, who affirms that "the pagan doctrine of an abstract immortality for man is not taught in Scripture." In the camp of moderate liberalism, Reuss, whose cautious judgment is well known, has declared that the philosophical thesis of the immateriality and indestructibility of the human soul "is absolutely foreign to the religion of the Bible." (*History of Christian Theology in the Apostolic Age*, II. 457. Cf. p. 237.) One can thus understand without difficulty, that when in October 1883, Prof. Aug. Sabatier combated the traditional dogma in the Theological Society of Paris, not one of his colleagues undertook to defend it. Here, then, is a truth which from this time forth we have gained, or rather regained. The Jews boasted that they were children of Abraham. More audacious still, the disciples of Plato say that they are of the same essence with God, and that they have an inalienable right to share in His eternity. Creatures of the dust declare themselves forever indispensable as God himself. And what if, according to the Titanic but logical

conceptions of the philosopher Schelling, these demi-gods should some day, swelling with pride, rise in insurrection against their Father and throw in his face the immortality with which they are invested? "As children come of age, they will say, we claim the right to govern ourselves; we will break the yoke which weighs heavily upon us." Does God correct them? They curse him. If He overwhelm them with favors they will look upon such benefits as merely the legitimate appanage of children of the Most High. Man has been overrated. To such inflated arrogance the Scripture opposes words like these: Return, ye children of men; return to the dust out of which your bodies were formed, to the nothingness from which Divine munificence had brought you forth.

Exegesis recognizes then, *a priori*, that essential immortality, and consequently Universalism, are doctrines opposed to the Bible.

Let us now examine the value of certain *a posteriori* proofs that are adduced from Scripture in support of Universalism. We have seen that there are certain passages of Scripture which seem to announce a universal salvation. But let us not misinterpret them. These passages treat of an epoch when, the conflict ended, peace will be made with all the survivors. As to the victims of the second death, they

can have, alas, only the peace of the churchyard, of that laystall of souls which the Scripture calls Gehenna. In his great chapter on the resurrection, Paul passes sinners by in silence, inasmuch as their survival, taught elsewhere, will be but ephemeral. It does not enter the apostle's thought that the reprobate possess an imperishable life, this being the exclusive privilege of the righteous. Let us consider, among the passages cited against us, those which appear most favorable to the position we are combating.

“And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me.”

“As through one trespass the judgment came unto all men to condemnation, even so, through one act of righteousness, the free gift came unto all men to justification of life.”

“God hath shut up all unto disobedience, that he might have mercy upon all.”

“Jesus Christ the righteous, a propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but for the whole world.”

This is the bright and joyous side of the gospel. It is the plan of divine mercy extended to the whole world, to all sinners without exception; but in the language of M. Reuss, it has to do with “an offered grace, not with a necessary effect.” The expression

oi polloi, of which Paul makes so frequent use, designates, in his vocabulary, "humanity" in the modern sense of collectivity. A term so general as this assuredly admits of exceptions. If, for example, we say that Jenner's discovery of the efficacy of vaccination has delivered *humanity* from a great curse, we should not pretend to deny that thousands of children still die of small-pox outside of the countries where vaccination has been introduced. In like manner our admiration of the munificent provision of divine love should not cause us to forget that men may still defeat the plan of God concerning themselves (*ethetsan*, Luke vii. 30). Such is the very point of the expression used by Jesus Christ with reference to the Pharisees and doctors of the law. "How often would I have gathered you as a hen gathereth her brood, *but ye would not.*" (Luke xiii. 34.) Jesus embraces the whole world in his love, and would draw all men unto himself, but how many there are who resist the divine purpose! "Jesus Christ draws souls; he does not force them. Human liberty has its privileges and its perils, but it is everywhere proclaimed and dealt with as a serious reality. The doctrine of universal and obligatory salvation implies, we think, a misconception of the liberty of man. A free soul has always the power to lose itself. One could wish that none

would ever exercise this power ; but experience in the present life, together with certain declarations of the Bible, make it difficult to entertain this hope.”¹

All *may* be saved in Christ, so the apostle teaches us, but are all *actually* saved? Assuredly not. The gift of justification which is in Christ is accorded to us, all Scripture testifies, only upon certain conditions, and if the apostle Paul does not indicate them in the present passage, it is because he has done so in twenty other places in his epistle to the Romans, particularly at the beginning of this same chapter : “Being justified by faith,” he says, “we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.”²

The word “all” in Scripture is often hyperbolic. For example, when Paul declares that the gospel had been preached in his life-time “to every creature.” Nor is it necessary any longer to go on abusing the declaration of the apostle that “the gifts and the calling of God are without repentance.” (Rom. xi. 29.) It signifies that God is faithful ; but “if we deny Him, He also will deny us.”

The parable of “the unmerciful servant” was spoken to teach us that salvation is conditional. The compact which unites us to God is bilateral. God draws, he does not compel. He does not save

¹ P. Vallotton, *La Bible*, etc., p. 343.

² Rom. v. 1.

us *in spite of ourselves*. His patience is without doubt eternal, but by despising Him, do we not incur the danger, contingent beings that we are, of forfeiting its effects! We are indeed images of the divinity, but there are many fugitive images which become effaced. What a contrast do we find between Scripture and Universalism! Peter tells us that the salvation of the righteous is accomplished only with difficulty. (1 Peter iv. 18.) We are, says Paul, to “work out our own salvation with fear and trembling.” In the Universalist system, salvation is inevitable; it cannot fail of accomplishment. One would infer that the Bible had been written for the purpose of tranquilizing the impenitent; that God had sent His Son into the world that whosoever believeth *not* on Him should have eternal life. Paul weeps over those “whose God is their belly,” saying that their “end is perdition.” Universalists bid the apostle dry his tears. God’s perverse children are not *really* lost. Their destruction will prove the renovation of their being. To destroy and to save thus become synonymous terms. The wrath of the Lamb, of which the Apocalypse speaks, will be but a great effusion of tenderness over the recovery of obstinate sinners. Jesus would have us “strive to enter in at the strait gate.” “The broad way,” he said, “leadeth to destruction.” No, say our Univer-

salist friends, it also leads to life ; a longer, perchance an easier way, it conducts us to the same desired haven. Jesus threatens the sinner with fire which can destroy both body and soul in Gehenna. (*Apolesai*, Matt. x. 28.) But let us reassure ourselves. The threat is impossible of execution. The soul is absolutely imperishable, and irrevocably “doomed to salvation.”¹ According to Universalism, the corrupt fish of the parable come to life again ; the tares that are thrown into the fire becomé wheat ; the severed branch of the vine throws out verdant shoots amid the flames. The sinner is not the blackened and half-consumed brand plucked from the burning ; he is the imperishable diamond which, fallen for a time into the mire, will at length be recovered with its value undiminished. Universalism has never yet explained how Jesus could have said of Judas “good were it for that man if he had never been born.” If a happy eternity was sure to follow his chastisement, however prolonged the latter might be, it was surely to the advantage even of Judas to have been brought into existence !

Is it forgotten that there are in the Scriptures irrevocable sentences, irreparable ruin, sin against the Holy Ghost, sins which are to be forgiven neither in this world, nor in that which is to come ; mortal

¹ Miss F. P. Cobbe.

sins for which it were useless to pray ; a severity of God which will cause Him to cut off even those branches which were grafted upon “the wild olive tree”? “God is not mocked.” Anguish, despair and terrible destruction will be the portion of the impenitent. The God of the gospel is also “a consuming fire” which “shall devour the adversaries” ; not their sins alone, but their proper persons.

But when hard pressed, Universalists abandon to us the *letter*, to invoke the *spirit* of Scripture, which, they say, is against us.

In support of this comfortable exegesis, they remind us of the apostle’s words : “The letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life.” Out of this saying has been constructed a principle of hermeneutics according to which it is not necessary to take in a literal sense images and hyperboles. Jesus commands us to turn the left cheek to him who smites us on the right. This is the letter. He said to one who smote him, “why smitest thou me?” This is the spiritual interpretation. This rule we accept. But to pretend that in order to get at the spirit of a passage we must take the sense which is directly contrary to the letter, is to “put darkness for light, and light for darkness” ; to “put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter !” It is to kill exegesis outright. The general sense must result from the details of

the letter, just as in a reckoning, dollars are formed by the addition of cents. "The letter, of course, must not kill the spirit; neither must the spirit nullify the letter. Exegesis of this flighty kind so loses from view the terra firma of the Biblical text that it ceases to be its commentary."¹

"To die" never signifies "to live," though it be in torments. Life must ever be the existence of active and sensitive beings, and death the cessation of life, with this exception, that sometimes the cessation of life may be partial, apparent, proleptic, or virtual. Now, in Scripture, the final death which threatens the obstinate sinner is death without circumlocution or reserve. It is complete, definitive death.

To *save* is to deliver from imminent destruction. The "tree of Life" does not grow beside the "lake of fire and brimstone." There is a second death; nothing is said of a *third* life. The imagination must not be wiser than Scripture, and, as has been well said, "more Christian than Jesus Christ Himself."

Universalist at heart, the pious Tholuck honestly avowed the exegetical weakness of his position. Reuss declares it absolutely anti-biblical. "Final restitution," he remarks, "that is to say, the salva-

¹ E. de Pressensé.

tion of the reprobate, neither Paul nor any other member of the primitive church ever dreamed of.”¹ Professor Godet agrees here with Reuss. “Nowhere,” he says, “does St. Paul teach a universal salvation. There are even, in his writings, passages which seem expressly to exclude the doctrine.” Finally, Professor Menegoz has come to the same conclusion. “Paul,” says he, “does not teach the final salvation of all men. God would show mercy unto all; nevertheless there are those who will be condemned.”

Our honored opponents will with difficulty resist the authority of this triple verdict.

Ill at ease in the territory of *metaphysics*, banished from the field of *Scripture*, Universalism intrenches itself in the domain of *sentiment*. It invokes in its favor the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man.

It is worth while to remark that these two notions belong, not to natural theology, but to Holy Scripture. Sentiments of paternity under false Gods, and human brotherhood among non-biblical peoples, rise but little above zero. It is, therefore, the Scriptures which should determine for us what this fatherhood, this brotherhood, really mean.

We recognize the fact that the traditional theology

² *Pauline Epistles*, I., p. 262.

has suppressed, in its representations of the divine character, that element of tenderness and compassion which a good father introduces even into his chastisements. "While the older systems emphasize before all else the authority of God, His royal prerogatives, *we* see in Him essentially the Father of whom Jesus has taught us. The old orthodoxy saw in God, above all else, an omnipotent ruler. We, in our day, think of His omnipotence as employed to protect, to assist, to bless." It is not to be assumed, however, that the divine paternity is mere weak indulgence. The living God demands at any price the progress of his creature. The Spartan mother said to her son departing for the wars: "With it, or Upon it!" bring back thy shield with victory, or let it serve thee for a bier! The divine law of progress cries to us: Move on, or die. "He that soweth to his flesh," said the apostle, "shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting." "If, by the Spirit, ye mortify the deeds of the flesh, ye shall live; but if ye live according to the flesh ye shall die." (Gal. vi. 8. Rom. viii. 13.) No halt is possible; we *must* advance or suffer loss. He who rests in the flesh is straightway delivered to the dominion of laws which remorselessly destroy everything that does not move onward. Such is divine paternity in

Nature and in Grace. As regards punishment it sometimes assumes a severe and even frightful aspect, as for example in certain maladies which are the direct result and penalty of sin. A great proprietor employs workmen who have no other resources. Here, he says to them, are a hundred francs earnest-money for each of you. Cultivate my vineyards. The vintage over, you shall each of you receive a thousand francs. But among these workmen are found some who idle the time away, neglecting the task imposed, and accepted. Is that proprietor to be accused of unjust severity if he withhold the compensation conditionally promised? Ought we not rather to admire the liberality of those advances which he risked and lost? In this our parable, the earnest-money represents the present life, the promised recompense the life eternal, the refusal to bestow it, the fate reserved for the impenitent sinner who is left to decay and the endurance of the second death. Reverting to the Divine Paternity, let us take the ideal of a good father. We find the best example of such an ideal in the parable of the Prodigal Son. The father kept his elder son at home. Although surrounded by a number of servants we do not find that he sent any one to seek out the guilty prodigal. The heavenly Father, for His part, presses mercy to its furthest limits. He

plies us with messages of reconciliation ; He goes so far as to deliver up to death the Son of His love, who devotes himself to the saving of men ; He offers pardon to the chief of sinners ; but if there are those who “trample under foot the Son of God, profaning the blood of the New Covenant, and doing despite unto the Spirit of grace,” “there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, but only a fearful looking for of judgment and a fierceness of fire which shall devour the adversaries.” The terrible fate of Jerusalem, the holy city, of which not one stone was left upon another, attests historically the sterner side of the divine paternity. “It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.”

Such a view is logical, and the Christian conscience is constrained to ratify the sentence pronounced by Scripture.

One cannot imagine an agency which would avail to affect a man whom the work of Jesus Christ and the testimony of the Holy Spirit in his heart leaves finally insensible to their power. In absolutely refusing to admit that any human soul can perish, Universalists remind us of those Jews who were unable to conceive that God would ever permit the destruction of their sanctuary. It is true, the temple was precious ; souls are very precious ; but the rights of eternal justice are more precious still. The

Heavenly Father of the gospel remains faithful to his threatenings as well as to his promises.

Universalism, on the other hand, does not allow that God has created responsible beings with liberty to destroy themselves. All will be saved whatever they may do to prevent it. God owes to every creature an unconditional and perpetual prolongation of existence, and is bound to assure their eternal happiness. Universalism shows itself generous at the expense of justice and liberty. It is a doctrine born of certain leveling tendencies belonging to our own time, which would proscribe every kind of superiority, including those of talent and virtue. It comports with the vulgar demand that bad workmen should be paid at the same rate as the good. "The demagogic instinct," as Amiel has said, "would have us believe in an equality of merit wherever we find a similarity of pretension." We will leave to God the liberty He has reserved to Himself of entrusting to one five talents, to another two, and to a third only one. Let us leave to Him also the liberty to withdraw from this last his one talent, if he have put it to no good use. "From him that hath not shall be taken away even that which he hath." Here, again, there is for the individual, as such, a menace of extinction, since he *is* only that which he *has*. Let the hill, then, instead of envying the mountain, give

thanks and be happy in the thought that it is not a mole-hill ; let the mole-hill in its turn appreciate the unmerited favor that raises it above the grain of sand ; let this last bless God that He has deigned to give it being. The responsibilities of every man are measured by his prerogatives ; his guilt by the abuse of divine gifts ; and his punishments by the extent of that injury which every abuse entails. The ruin of a millionaire will cause him sufferings and privations more painful than those of the poor man who has never possessed riches. Longer and more poignant griefs will accompany the dissolution of a greater mass of vital forces ; of a soul more richly endowed, and, if it fall, the more culpable.

The doctrine of Conditional Immortality, therefore, establishes a constant and exact equilibrium between these three factors : gifts, responsibilities, retributions. Every privilege constitutes a loan, for which the Divine Creditor exacts His interest at the normal rate ; the entrusted capital is taken away again from the bad debtor ; a threat of expropriation hangs over the insolvent tenant, to be executed if he become insolent. According to the beautiful saying of Akibah, “Everything is given under security ; the market is free ; the trader gives credit ; but the books are open ; every debt is recorded, and, sooner or later, must be paid whether one will or

not." But Universalism does not like to hear of a difference even in the virtue of men. "Let us learn," it says, "that we ought not to think ourselves better than others; men are all of equal worth or very nearly so." It may be that they are of about the same worth; but two lines which are only *nearly* parallel are divergent; they terminate at opposite extremities of the world. Wherever there is life, that is to say, constant progress or retrogression, it is the *tendency* which is of importance. Against the indiscriminate herding of mankind, the obliteration of distinctions between the wicked and the righteous, the saved and the lost, we should be ever on our guard.

"Ye have wearied the Lord with your words . . . when ye say, Every one that doeth evil is good in the sight of the LORD, and He delighteth in them; or, Where is the God of judgment?"¹

Lastly, Universalists appeal to sentiments of natural affection, which, as they think, would be violated by the position we hold.

In his thesis on personal survival, a recent writer² formulates this objection as follows: "After this life, it is often said to us in the Gospels, perfect happiness is reserved for souls without blemish. I

¹ Mal. ii. 17.

² M. Atger.

am not able to reconcile this promise with the doctrine of annihilation. We have sons, brothers, parents, friends, who are dearer to us than ourselves; and who, so to speak, live in our lives. How can we be perfectly happy if destined to see them no more? In the midst of his perfect felicity in the abodes of the elect, the father will be tortured by the mournful thought that the son whom he so loved is forever separated from him, and that this being, the object of so much solicitude and affection, is condemned to absolute non-entity." We would observe that the difficulty which is urged may be found in part at least in Universalism. The writer admits a retribution, and consequent sufferings, beyond the grave. These sufferings may be very long and very grievous, and would therefore presumably diminish the happiness of the sufferer's parents or friends to whom they became known. Moreover we would ask what it is that we love in our fellow creatures, their good or their evil qualities? Assuredly it is their good qualities, and until these have altogether disappeared, it is permitted us to hope. They constitute a soil in which the seed of a new life may yet germinate and grow. Ten just persons in Sodom would have saved the city. The same rule is without doubt applicable to individuals. It is allowable to think that so long as

they are susceptible to correction, God will not reject them altogether. But suppose them utterly perverse, root and branch, and all their natural affections denaturalized, and our compassionate affection will give place to horror.

“Thus saith the Lord, if there is juice left in the grape, any sound portion in the cluster, the saying is, destroy not the cluster for a blessing is in it. So will I do for my servants’ sakes, that I may not destroy them all.”¹

Thus, according to the analogy of Nature, which we should never be weary of invoking, the most beautiful body, most idolized in life, after it has become a corpse, is only an object of repugnance and a painful reminder which is shunned by all. Doleful remembrances there will necessarily be in heaven; to begin with, the recollection of our own faults; there may be weeping there; but “God shall wipe away all tears from our eyes.” “Who,” asks Jesus, “is my mother? and who are my brethren?” “Whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother.” When we become like Christ, we shall love no more according to the flesh; the affections of Christ will be ours.¹

¹ We see, then, that Conditionalism does not lead to the same barbarous consequences as the traditional dogma, which

III. UNIVERSALISM IS MORALLY DANGEROUS.

Finally, Universalism has, we think, an immoral and dangerous tendency.

If all men without exception are absolutely predestined to inherit eternal life ; if final, enforced, infallible, universal salvation has received the guarantee of the Divine government, what more is necessary to plunge as many as desire to sleep into the slumber of sweet and perfect quietude ? Of what use is it to watch and to struggle, if one have eternity in which to act ? With eternity before him, and the Divine mercy always at his disposal, the sinner will imagine that he can drink with impunity of the cup of forbidden pleasures. Universalists, it is true, speak of a species of purgatory ; but this purgatory, should he ever find it in his way, the sinner flatters himself he will be able to make of short duration by an appeal, necessarily irresistible, to the mercy of the kind heavenly Father whose reassuring portrait has been drawn for him ; to that mercy which knows absolutely no bound. Epicureanism says : "Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die." In his turn, a partisan of Universalism might well say : Let us eat and drink, let us lead a life of pleasure, and banish every anxious interdiction to the elect all pity for the reprobate.—Chrysostom, *Hom. in II. Ep. ad Cor.*

thought; for God, ever indulgent, will pardon us to-morrow. Whatever we may do, an eternity of happiness awaits us. "The reasoning of this sinner is ignoble," respond the doctors of Universalism. "We make our appeal to sentiments more exalted." Be it so, but where are such sentiments cultivated? Only here and there in the heart of the multitude. We will quote in this connection the testimony not of a theologian, but of an illustrious Voltairean of the 19th century; a man who, more than many others, possessed a knowledge of men. We refer to M. Thiers. "Man," said he, "is naturally a coward, a dastard, and an idler."¹ Natures in which these characteristics predominate—the major part of mankind—Universalism abandons with contempt to their increasing degradation, at the same time asserting their final recovery. On the contrary, the God of the Bible takes pity on these people. He speaks to them, warns them, and often alarms and saves them. Of the two doctrines then, which is in truth the more tender? That which, effeminate itself, weakly leaves effeminate people to perish, or the biblical doctrine which seizes them with a strong hand and arrests their fatal course?

These two theories have for their base two differ-

¹ *The Fortnightly Review*, Nov. 1879.

ent notions of sin. Universalism does not take sin very seriously ; moral evil is not with it a tragic fact ; it is a stain of dirt with which the disobedient child soils his robe, but which may be effaced with a little water. With us, sin is a corrosive. Though restrained, or even pardoned, it has certain effects which are quite irreparable. Unpardoned, it "eat-eth as doth a gangrene," and totally destroys its victim.

Of all the theologians of Germany, Dr. Dorner is one of the most eminent. Let us note his feeling toward Universalism. "The doctrine of Mr. White," he has recently written, "appears far preferable to the Universalist theory ; for it recognizes much more fully the rights of human liberty and divine justice."¹

Some aspire to improve upon the Bible. The motive of fear is suppressed as an unfashionable motive. Many a preacher is silent upon the wrath to come, though its undertone is heard from one end

¹ A perusal of the last few pages of Dorner's *Dogmatik* will suffice to show how much his position resembles our own. The same may be said of his colleague, the late Dr. Nitzsch. It is a remarkable fact that neither absolute Universalism nor the traditional dogma can count among its supporters any scholars of the first rank in the theological world of Germany. The great Rothe was a Conditionalist. Ritschl is the same. Baader, Weisse, Olshausen, Twisten, Karsten, Hermann Schultz, von Rudloff, Gess, are more or less explicitly identified with the same view.

of the New Testament to the other. As a result, such preaching loses more than half its power. And indeed, if Universalism is true, why should the pastor, the Christian publicist, the evangelist, the missionary, multiply their painful efforts! There is no danger in delay; there is in reality no such thing as the salvation of souls, since they are incapable of being lost. The very nerve of apostleship is thus half paralyzed. Indeed, no one has yet heard of a missionary society founded and sustained by Universalists.¹

Finally, universal salvation contradicts even itself; for if the salvation of every one is assured, there is no danger, and salvation, having no longer a *raison d'être*, becomes a word void of meaning.

But if we are silent, the very stones will cry out. A writer who is a stranger to the present discussion—a Darwinist—has recently recognized the fact that fear is a great and precious motive of the natural man. “In peril, either possible, probable, inevitable, or imminent, we find the great motive which urges indolent men to the exercise of all their faculties. Our faculties slumber in the assurance of

¹ In October, 1886, since the above was written, the denomination in America voted to undertake the work of foreign missions. If this tardy vote may be regarded as a foundation, it is still uncertain what may be built thereon. C. H. O.

peace and safety, while they are stimulated and elevated to the highest degree by peril. Progress is realized when these faculties are roused, not when they slumber." "Suppose that all ways and every life led infallibly to the highest good; then all things, including all evil, become indifferent. Toil, virtue, vice and crime, egotism and love, do not differ, but are at root identical. If every way by a natural necessity conducts to God, liberty is nothing, for it serves no purpose; labor is absurd; choice is stupid. There is but one thing to do in the world; to go to sleep in the sunshine, and remain stretched upon the earth, obeying no other impulse than that of the senses." (Gratry.) Though our fears were excessive, they would be salutary considering the evil tendencies of the human soul. If, on the contrary, as we believe, Universalism is a false system, its awful effect will be the lulling of slumbering souls into the eternal sleep.

"Imprudent man," exclaims De Felice, "what art thou doing? What will become of the sanctions of the moral law? Where will be the check to vice, the terror of crime? Dost thou not see that visible things already outweigh so much in our natural affections the things which are invisible, and present things, the things which are to come, that if thou destroyest by thy sophisms the wholesome fear of

the judgments of God, nothing will remain but ardent, insatiable passions, clashing furiously with one another throughout the journey of life? In denying the hell of the future, thou makest a hell in the present ; with this immense difference, that here the good will be oppressed by the evil. A doctrine is to be judged by its effects, as a tree is known by its fruits. Examine, then, this doctrine of thine by the same rule, and thou wilt not wait until to-morrow before pronouncing it to be a lie."

There are, we know, glorious spirits who despise equally both punishments and rewards. These do good, they say, for the love of good, disdaining all lower motives. Will they deign to cast upon the rest of mankind a compassionate regard? Such lofty motives can actuate only a select few. Jesus did not come for the sake of such just persons only, but for us poor sinners who find no excess of incentive with all the goads and all the restraints of the gospel. Borne on by the torrent of passion, we seek a foothold ; a rope flung out for succor, the branch of a tree, anything which our cramped hands may seize. The promises and threatenings of our Saviour are, for us, instruments of salvation. For pity's sake let them be left to us !

Universalism is giving way at its very foundation. It sets out with a *petitio principii* ; it perverts the

Scriptures when it does not contradict them ; it enervates the soul. From this threefold point of view it is very feeble, but we will admit that it is mighty with all that force of inertia which, at the root of human nature, pleads in favor of letting things go as they will. Popular at little cost, as well as wildly optimistic, absolute Universalism insists upon viewing all things in a rosy light. We breathe it in the moral atmosphere of our effeminate age. A salvation assured and guaranteed at all hazards ; what a fallacious ideal of existence here below ! Struggle is imposed upon all. Humanity marches toward immortality, as the army of Hannibal on its way to Italy. We encounter narrow defiles, lofty precipices, violent tempests, fatigues without number. Welcome would be the voice which should say to us that we might sleep without danger on the snow whose soft carpet is spread under our feet. Sweet were the accents of the Siren inviting the mariner to quit his painful manœuvring of the sails and helm ! From the depths of our soul and conscience we protest against this doctrine, whose error and danger we have striven to expose. We believe its tendency is to lead the church and society into abysses, toward catastrophes in which the moral sense would at length be restored to vigor

by the bloody reprisals of a Divine justice too long treated with derision.

“Thus saith the Lord of hosts, Hearken not unto the words of the prophets who say unto them that despise me : Ye shall have peace. . . . Behold the tempest of the Lord, even His fury is gone forth, yea, a whirling tempest ; it shall burst upon the head of the wicked.”¹

“This is a rebellious people, lying children, children that will not hear the law of the Lord : which say to the seers, See not ; and to the prophets, Prophecy not unto us right things, speak unto us smooth things, prophecy deceits.”²

“For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. When they are saying, Peace and safety, then suddenly destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child ; and they shall in no wise escape. But ye, brethren, are not in darkness . . . so then let us not sleep, as do the rest ; but let us watch and be sober.”³

¹ Jerem. xxiii.

² Isa. xxx.

³ 1 Thess. v. 2, ff.

THIRD ESSAY.

Christ's Favorite Maxim.

“Whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it. For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?”—Matt. xvi. 25, 26.

Such is the received translation of what may be called the favorite maxim of Jesus. No aphorism, it would seem, was oftener upon his lips. In forms more or less complete it is found no less than six times in the Gospels; and, significantly enough, it appears at once in John and in the Synoptists.¹ Dr. F. Godet finds in this saying “the foundation of the moral philosophy of Jesus Christ.” Bonnet speaks of “its supreme importance.” At the same time it is very mysterious, enigmatic, and even paradoxical.

One word in particular has been the despair of translators. They have all stumbled at the Greek term *psuche*, which they have rendered sometimes

¹ Matt. x. 39; xvi. 25, 26; Mark viii. 35-37; Luke ix. 24, 25; xvii. 33; John xii. 25.

by *life* and sometimes by *soul*, although neither the one expression nor the other is entirely satisfactory.

In order to exhibit more clearly the difficulty, let us first employ the word *soul*. "He who will save his soul shall lose it." But this offends our thought. Jesus would appear to condemn a pious and laudable undertaking. Such a translation would be evidently a contradiction.

Take, then, the word *life*. In this case a contradiction of thought quite as grave is introduced into the verse which immediately follows. Jesus would ask what could compensate for the loss of life ; in other words, what is more precious than life itself. As generally understood, the word *life* refers to the present life. This translation is therefore evidently misleading. Jesus would seem to teach that existence here below is the highest good. But the Christian, and even the simple patriot, knows that there are treasures of greater price ; and Jesus Himself gives us to understand elsewhere that it is sometimes worth while to sacrifice this life. Reuss, who, in his translation, retains the word "life" throughout the passage, acknowledges that this term "does not render the original very clearly." It is certainly equivocal. One can understand therefore how the translators have preferred here to use the word *soul* instead of the word *life* adopted by them in the pre-

ceding verse. But to employ in the same argument and in two consecutive verses two different words to render one and the same original term is to violate an established rule of translation.

What shall be done? We see but two alternatives. We should hold throughout to the word "life," adding, as an indispensable explanation, that the original term designates sometimes that which is called the human soul with the perspective of a future existence; or else we must have recourse to a paraphrase.

If a paraphrase be preferred, we might read as follows: "He who will save himself in contempt of the divine appeal, and will preserve at any price his *present* life, shall lose himself; but whosoever, for love of Me, will make, *for the time being*, the sacrifice of himself shall find himself again. Wise and worthy calculation! For what shall it profit a man briefly to prolong his earthly existence, and to gain perhaps the whole world, if he lose *himself*? With what can such a loss be compensated!" This paraphrase is founded upon the example given by the evangelist Luke, in one of the passages under consideration.¹ Moreover, we are able to appeal to the usage of the Aramaic Greek of the Gospels, whose roots

¹ Luke ix. 25: *heauton de apolesas*, the man who loses or forfeits his own self.

are buried in the Hebrew of the Old Testament. In Hebrew, "soul"—*nephesh*—serves often to designate *the person*. "The Lord of Hosts hath sworn by Himself,"¹ that is, literally "by His soul." From the biblical point of view, individuality resides in the "*nephesh*" or "*psuche*," *soul* or *life* of man, and God Himself is represented as *possessing*—more exactly as *being*—a soul.²

We now have the key to the enigma. Like the substantive of the original, our personal pronoun "himself" bears at times a double sense. It designates, by turns, according to the sequence of thought, the present life of the individual and that which survives the body. There is for every one an earthly life with the possibility of an immortal life.

The *himself* is conceived of as including an inferior and a superior himself.³ It is necessary to

¹ Jer. li. 14.

² In Hebrew, and, in general, in the Semitic languages, there is little (besides the pronominal verb) except this word "soul" with the personal suffix to correspond to our reflexive pronoun. In order to render *heauton*, himself—in Luke ix. 25—all the translators of the New Testament into Hebrew, Reichardt, Delitzsch, and Salkinson, are agreed in employing *naphsho*. It is the same in the old Syriac version. But the Greek of Luke is richer and more precise. It unites here in a single word the body and the soul which Matthew enumerates in a parallel context: "to destroy both body and soul" (x. 28).

³ Thus we say of the same man at the same moment: "he is no more; he is dead;" "he is in heaven, he lives with God."

subordinate and often to sacrifice the first to the second. The man who will save at any price the earthly life will lose the life immortal. He who, on the contrary, will sacrifice his earthly life to the service of Jesus Christ, will finally obtain a life imperishable.

What is it, then, to sacrifice the earthly life? It is, in the first place, in many passages which speak of persecution, to accept a violent death rather than to renounce Jesus Christ. It is, in the second place, to renounce for the service of Jesus Christ, not only evil inclinations, which goes without saying, but also the gratification of innocent tastes, and now and then of natural preferences. This, it may be, will involve the renunciation of a brilliant or a lucrative career, or popularity with the multitude, or an attractive marriage with an unconverted person, or perhaps the employment of some special talent. In a word, it will be to repress, in the case supposed, a certain development or expansion of one's own personality. Some pastor, for example, has the tastes of an artist. He will renounce art lest he should devote to it the time and the energy which he owes to his ministry. This second

This example shows clearly that the pronoun may have a double meaning. The sense of the substantives "existence" and "person" is often doubled in the same manner.

sense, like the first, is perfectly conformed to the genius of biblical language ; the soul, in Scripture, often designating the sum of human aspirations and sometimes a dominant passion. We see in the Gospel of John that Jesus applied to himself the maxim which he had made in a certain sense his motto. He renounced the legitimate joys of the family and every temporal ambition. He sacrificed his person and his life, but this loss was compensated in a speedy and glorious resurrection. Example and precept were admirably joined in Him. He sacrificed much ; He found again as much and more. The same is true of His disciples. He who died as a martyr sacrificed an ephemeral existence to obtain, in exchange, immortality. Every Christian believer will mortify worldly desires and tastes. He will obtain, in exchange, not only beyond the grave, but even here below, joys which are more noble and not less intense. He will, moreover, like the martyr, secure immortality for himself ; he will "lay hold on eternal life."

As Professor Drummond reminds us in his captivating studies upon *Natural Law in the Spiritual World*, this formula is anticipated by one of the greatest laws of Nature. Among individuals, as among species, only those organisms survive which accommodate themselves to the changes going on

around them, *renouncing* certain habits, to adopt a new order of life. The famous law of "the survival of the fittest" rests, in great measure, upon such renunciations, and upon the fact that certain types have this flexibility. On the other hand, those types which are refractory with regard to such transformations are exterminated, and found only in a fossil condition.

Let us note, in passing, the variety of expressions employed by the four Evangelists in reference to the manner of obtaining immortality. According to Matthew, the believer will *find* (*heuresei*), he will discover, as by miracle, that which he had lost. This evangelist has in view the essentially Jewish hope of the resurrection of the body. The Divine Omnipotence will intervene supernaturally in order to give life to the dead body lying in the sepulchre.

Luke, on the contrary, delights often in portraying the finer shades of Greek thought. The believer, according to him, will *reproduce* his life, (*zoogene-sei*).¹ This is the notion of the grain of wheat in

¹ Luke, the companion of Paul, thus recalls the image employed by that apostle, in one of his letters to the Greek converts at Corinth. 1 Cor. xv. 37. Jesus makes use of the same emblem at the time when the Greeks asked to see Him. John xii. 20, 24. He, however, had in view the growth of the church rather than his personal resurrection; the production of the ear rather than the simple reproduction of the seed deposited in the earth.

the Eleusinian mysteries. By a sort of collaboration, the grain comes to life again in the ear which it engenders or brings forth. It is the philosophical idea of palingenesis.

Mark represents rather the Roman faith; the faith of the soldier who hardly reasons at all. Without inquiring *how*, he knows that the believer, like a combatant, will finally come forth safe and sound from the conflict with death; he will wrest his life from the enemy who menaces it; he will *save* it (*sosei*).

Finally, as represented in the Gospel of John, the believer cannot die. He will not recover his life, nor will he reproduce it; he will not beat off death in a desperate encounter. Calm and tranquil, though vigilant, he will *keep* his life (*phulaxei*).

For the worldly as well as for the faithful, the profound genius of John makes eternity begin here below. He who prefers the world to Jesus Christ is in the way of destruction—the destruction of his being, (*apolluei*, Revised text, instead of the future of the Synoptist). He who believes on the Son has already eternal life. (John xii. 25; iii. 36; v. 24; vi. 47, 54; I John v. 11–13).

This expression comports with the most intimate thought of the Master, who said: “Whosoever liveth and believeth in Me shall never die.” (John v. 24;

vi. 50 ; viii. 51 ; xi. 25 *et seq.*) Begun here below, the communion of the believer with his Saviour is never interrupted. It survives the death of the body which in fact is but an apparent death.

Let us see, then, what sort of man he will be who, through indifference or through egoism,¹ refuses the required sacrifice. He will lose himself.

But again, what is it to lose one's self? We shall not have to seek very far in order to determine the precise meaning of the word *lose*. There will be no need to go beyond the context. To be saved, to obtain eternal salvation, we have seen that it is necessary to lose something. This something which we lose is absolutely suppressed, destroyed, annihilated. There is, for the martyr, the total suppression of earthly life, the destruction of present existence. There is, for every Christian, voluntary suppression, pure and simple, of certain pleasures. Thus, suppression is synonymous with annihilation. In view of the parallelism of the terms, it follows incontestably that to lose one's self, when immortality is concerned, will be to destroy, to suppress this

¹ Luke emphasizes the notion of a culpable egoism,—carnal, and, at root, sacrilegious ; in the Revised text *peripoiesasthai*,—which is taken sometimes in a bad sense, with the meaning to *monopolize* or *appropriate*. Man is not his own master. He has not the right to hold back when his God calls him.

perspective, and to annihilate one's self. It relates evidently, in virtue of lexicological correlation, to the loss of that which is called in philosophy the Ego, the individual personality. The destruction may be progressive; but in the end nothing will remain of that which loses its veritable selfhood.

The loss of the Christian is real but comparatively light, and in some measure provisional. The loss of the worldling is a supreme loss, the irreparable loss of existence. Suppose that at the last moment the worldling should wish to offer a ransom, to recover the possession of his being, about to be swallowed up in nothingness. Of what avail for this purpose would be all his hitherto acquired possessions? These could not give him back his life; and, moreover, he is about to lose them by soon ceasing to exist.¹ The man who conquers the whole world has been compared to a man who should buy a gallery of pictures and forthwith become blind. But even this lively comparison is a thousand times too feeble. The inheritor of some magnificent empire who should die upon the day of his coronation affords an image which is still too weak; for according to the teaching of Jesus Christ, to be lost is to be destroyed "soul and body," despoiled of

¹ Compare Psalm xlix. 7-10, to which Jesus seems to allude.

every faculty of one's being; to enter finally into the horror of eternal nothingness ¹

There is enough in this outlook to inspire salutary terror. Jesus leaves no hope of imperishable life to the man who despises His invitation. It is necessary to give one's self to Him or to perish; to commence straightway this surrender to Him or to begin at once to decay. He who obstinately rejects the Saviour will at last perish altogether and forever. By slow and direful agonies in the world to come, he will attain finally to the effacement and complete suppression of his individuality.

In a few words our text tells us of two existences, of which the one is terrestrial and ephemeral, the

¹ Compare Matt. x. 28, and the valuable work of D. H. Meyer, "The Christianity of Christ," page 307 *et seq.* The proper and normal sense of the verb "to perish" (*apollumi*) is moreover clearly set forth in its nakedness in another passage of Matthew relating to the amputated limb, which rots and perishes. v. 29, 30. Cf. Mark xiv. 4; Luke xxi. 18; John vi. 12, 27; Acts xxvii. 34; James i. 11; Rev. xviii. 14. The sense *to cease to exist* is evident. It is the same with another verb employed in Matt. xvi. 26,—*zemiousthai*,—which does not, any more than *apollusthai*, mean to endure pain. It signifies "to be injured," to "pay a fine," and in this particular case, to pay at the cost of his existence or of an injury to his being. When, in respect of the soul, a sense is given to the word "lose" which it never bears in ancient Greek, accuracy is sacrificed to a mere philosophical hypothesis. Lexicology protests against such violence done to the sacred Scriptures.

other heavenly and eternal; the one, as it were, intended to be grafted upon the other. Jesus exhorts man to sacrifice, when the occasion is presented to him, the earthly for the heavenly life. The required sacrifice implies, in the case of the martyr, a total suppression of the terrestrial existence; in any case, the loss of present temporal advantage. *To lose* is therefore synonymous with "to suffer deprivation" when the actual life is concerned. Nothing can prevent—every consideration impels us to allow—the same sense to the same word, when, in the second member of the same passage, the future life is concerned. It follows that those who refuse the sacrifice required, must suffer the deprivation of their existence. Unhappily Platonic notions, infiltrating the church, have falsified the sense of the most important terms of this important declaration. To the human soul, as such, has been attributed gratuitously an absolute immortality without reserve or condition. It has resulted from this that the word "to lose" has been robbed of its natural and legitimate meaning. It signifies "to suppress," and it is made to signify "to render eternally miserable." But, in distorting the sense of these words, the balanced adjustment of the reasoning in the two verses before us is overthrown; the point of the divine paradox is obscured; the steel of its two-edged

sword is blunted ; the key of the enigma is put out of shape and spoiled. This saying of Jesus has become untranslatable. Rigorous exegesis alone must decide whether our conclusions are well founded. It is at least a question worth examining. It concerns the Favorite Maxim of Jesus Christ.

APPENDIX I.

ANSWERS TO OBJECTIONS URGED AGAINST THE DOCTRINE OF THE GRADUAL EXTINCTION OF OBDURATE SINNERS.¹

OBJECTION I.—Does not the saying that a certain sin “shall not be forgiven in this world, nor in the world to come,” imply eternal suffering?

It implies eternal punishment, not eternal suffering. The gradual death of the sinner, which is consummated in the world to come, is the remediless punishment of this unpardonable sin.

OBJ. II.—The predictions which foretell eternal punishment may convey the idea of limited duration in the Old Testament; but when quoted in the New Testament they predict absolutely endless suffering.

This assertion rests only upon the assumption of man’s natural immortality, a doctrine equally foreign to both the New and the Old Testament.

¹ These Objections were made by members of a Society of pastors and professors of theology in Switzerland, before whom the first of these Essays was read.

OBJ. III.—Jesus repeatedly threatened sinners with terrible punishment.

Utter destruction, preceded by the protracted pangs of the second death, is indeed a terrible punishment.

OBJ. IV.—*Kolasis aionios* and *zoe aionios* (Matt. xxv. 46) imply the equal duration of the punishment and of the reward.

As the final extinction of the sinner constitutes the punishment, this punishment, in its effect, is really of equal duration with the blessedness of the redeemed. Inamissible salvation, irremissible punishment; irrevocable gift, irrecoverable loss. The endless extinction of those who once had life, and might have had it for ever, is just as perpetual in duration as endless life. Cicero, Lucretius, Horatius, Tertullian, all spoke of eternal non-existence as of an eternal doom.

OBJ. V.—As man was created in God's image, he must be as immortal as God Himself.

Although man was created in God's image, he is not omnipresent, and possesses neither omniscience nor omnipotence. There is therefore no reason for concluding that he must necessarily live for ever. Man has been placed by the so-called orthodox doc-

trine upon too lofty a pedestal ; he is no “partaker of the Divine nature,” except through regeneration (2 Pet. i. 4). Adam was the image of God, and His representative, chiefly as a mirror of Divine consciousness and a king over the lower creation (Gen. i. 26 ; Ps. viii. 5 and following verses). Even if he had immortality, he may have lost it, as he lost other features of the image of God, sinlessness for instance.

OBJ. VI.—Nothing is ever annihilated in nature ; atoms always retain their identity.

We do not deal with atoms, but with human beings ; for them, complete destruction and disintegration is practically annihilation. Is not a book, for instance, or a bank note, practically annihilated when reduced to smoke and ashes ? What is an atom ? And is the soul an atom ? If you say that it is, are you not investing it with a material nature ? Natural fire *destroys* material substances, and the invisible fire of sin consumes and destroys souls. Might we not be justified in terming a soul dead which had utterly and for ever lost even one of its essential faculties ; for instance, individual consciousness ?

OBJ. VII.—The word “annihilate” is not Scriptural.

The question is not whether this term, the use of which needs to be well guarded, has, in its *scientific* sense, an exact counterpart in the language of the Bible. What we maintain is, simply, that the Bible teaches, in the plainest and most emphatic terms, that the end of the hopelessly impenitent is their final and complete extinction.

OBJ. VIII.—*Kolasis* means mutilation, not annihilation.

Yes; but successive mutilations would ultimately put an end to the mutilated creature. If you sever the essential parts of a whole, the whole as such exists no longer. Besides, when the punishment, or *kolasis*, is understood as a cutting off from the tree of life, the ultimate fate of a branch thus severed must be practically annihilation.

OBJ. IX.—The Egyptians believed in eternal torments, and so did Plato.

And are idolaters and heathen philosophers to determine the creed of Christians? Did not the earth revolve when it was thought to be stationary? and was slavery the less odious because men thought it just? Again, on what does the Platonic theory rest? On conjecture. Let us quote the words of an orthodox professor of divinity at Montauban: “I do not deny,” he says, “that philosophy may bring

forward high sounding arguments in favor of immortality; and Heaven forbid that I should try to weaken their force. But I shall only express the conviction of all who have studied moral philosophy, and have made themselves acquainted with the latest discussions, if I affirm that, by the light of reason only, we can but arrive at suppositions, conjectures, let us frankly say, desires. After all, why should we be immortal?"¹ Let us add, that after a thousand years the shades of Tartarus drank the waters of Lethe; that Plato reserves eternal suffering only for a small number of great criminals; that neither Cicero, Epicurus, nor Seneca agreed with Plato on the question of man's immortality; and that we can quote the modern Chinese in opposition to the ancient Egyptians.

OBJ. X.—The parables of our Lord all teach eternal suffering.

We ask for an instance. The parable of the rich man and Lazarus, which is sometimes quoted against our view, says nothing of the *duration* of the flames of Hades.

OBJ. XI.—Man could never have invented the doctrine of everlasting torment.

¹ Ch. Bois, *De la Valeur religieuse du Surnaturel*, p. 34.

Facts appear to contradict this assertion; *ab esse ad posse valet consequentia*.

OBJ. XII.—There are many mysteries in religion in general, and in eschatology in particular.

“Those things which are revealed belong unto us and to our children for ever,”¹ and it is generally admitted that the fate of the wicked is among those things which are revealed.

OBJ. XIII.—The declaration of Jesus Christ is, “their worm dieth not, and their fire is not quenched.”

This imagery is reproduced *literatim* from the Old Testament. It is confessedly hyperbolic in the Old Testament, and is equally so in the New, being used in both cases to represent total, hopeless, and final destruction. It is to be regretted that, in our version of the Bible, passages of the Old Testament are quoted in the New without inverted commas or marks of any kind. Much importance has been attached to the threefold quotation of this passage in Mark ix. 44, 46, 48. But, on consideration, two of these verses are to be excluded as spurious, and they are not found in the parallel passage in Matthew.²

¹ Deut. xxix. 29.

² See *A Critical English New Testament*. Bagster and Sons, 1871.

The worm feeds only on senseless and putrefying flesh; fire consumes the dead bones, it cannot be quenched until it has accomplished its work of destruction, and nothing is finally left but nameless dust and foul smoke, the type of constant and awful remembrance. As to the term *asbestos*, "unquenchable," in ver. 43, the poet Homer uses it in describing the conflagration of the Grecian fleet, which is certainly extinguished now.² The historian Eusebius employs the same word in the same hyperbolical sense: "Cronion and Julian were beaten with rods," he says, "and then burnt in unquenchable fire." And elsewhere: "Two other martyrs, Epimachus and Alexander, after having been imprisoned for some time, had their flesh torn with iron claws, and were then destroyed in unquenchable fire."—*Ecclesiastical History*.

OBJ. XIV.—Your theory attaches too much importance to a particular doctrine.

The question is not whether this doctrine, which is not exclusively our theory, is more or less important, but whether it is true.

OBJ. XV.—This view will convert no one to the truth of Christianity.

That remains to be proved; but it is certain that

² *Iliad*, xiii. 169, 564.

the traditional doctrine is a stumbling-block in the path of many. Eminent and confirmed infidels have been won back to faith by being brought to see the apostolical truth of life in Christ only.

OBJ. XVI.—We do not see that the destruction of the proud and ambitious begins here upon earth.

Their very pride and ambition are essentially a darkening of their reason; hence we have the expressions, “puffed up with pride,” “intoxicated with ambition:” such madness and intoxication have prepared the way for the fall of many a conqueror, and they lead to the ruin of all the proud, great or small.

OBJ. XVII.—The devils begged Jesus not to *destroy* them (*apolesai*). and immediately afterwards, not to send them out into the deep: therefore, for them at least, there is no annihilation. (See Matt. viii. 29, etc.; Mark i. 24; Luke iv. 34, viii. 31.)

Precisely the reverse. The demons would not have asked not to be destroyed unless they feared such a punishment; and the deep they dread is the scene of their gradual and final destruction.

OBJ. XVIII.—Moral beings cannot be destroyed.

Why not? What is a moral being? According to etymology, the phrase means a being governed by

certain habits which are under the control of his free will. This control, if wisely exercised, imparts such superiority and excellence to his habits that he has an especial right to the term *moral*. A *moral* man, therefore, means a man whose morals are good. An army becomes *demoralized* when it loses the habits of discipline which are necessary to its preservation. A man cannot exist without some degree of morality. "Morality is the chief distinction of man."¹ This is all, we believe, that can be included in the term moral being.

OBJ. XIX.—The torments of hell would be useless if they were not eternal. One cannot conceive of a being created for the purpose of being slowly consumed.

Still less can we conceive of a being created to be eternally tortured. Most things on earth end by gradual decay. Gradual extinction is the common fate of created things: stars, plants, and animals. With regard to the sufferings that precede the end of the wicked, they are such as to inspire salutary terror in beings tempted by evil.

OBJ. XX.—The destruction of the wicked would tend to show that God was mistaken in creating them.

¹ Comte de Kératry.

All visible created beings are subject to decay and perish successively; even some races of men are disappearing. Divine wisdom called them into being for the time of their existence, and why should it not be thus with the wicked! It is rather the eternal existence of evil and evil doers which would appear to be irreconcilable with the wisdom of the Creator.

OBJ. XXI.—“Outer darkness” does not necessarily imply absence of sensation. Intense suffering may exist in darkness.

All we said was that in the parables of Christ, “darkness” seems to typify the loss of sensation, in the same way as the expression “bound hand and foot” denotes the cessation of activity; and these emblems, taken together, depict the end of man’s very existence. Sight, in every language, is a symbol of sensation and perception in a general sense. Thus we say, metaphorically, “the mind’s eye,” “the look of faith,” etc. In Greek, “to see” is also “to know” (*eido, oida*). A blind man will speak of the pleasure of *seeing* his friends. In biblical phraseology, “to see good days” is not only to see but to spend and enjoy them. To “see good” is to live happy. Compare Ps. xxvii. 13, xxxiv. 12.

OBJ. XXII.—There is one passage where Paul speaks of eternal suffering, *olethron aionion* (2 Thess. i. 9).

Not eternal suffering, but “eternal destruction,” the word used by Plato for annihilation. This verse represents the wicked as being destroyed for ever; they shall never return from the nothingness into which they pass (compare Ps. xcii. 8). This very objection was used by a lady to whom I had been pointing out the error of the traditional doctrine. She wrote to me the same day, saying that immediately on her return home her eye had providentially lighted on the text of the objection: “They shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his power.” In this verse she saw the doctrine of eternal suffering. I replied that Providence had perhaps quite a different purpose. The passage, in fact, distinctly foretells *absolute, hopeless, and final* destruction. (See, in the Septuagint especially, Ps. lxviii. 2 (3), xcvii. 1–5; Jer. iv. 26; Lev. ix. 24, *apo prosopou Kurion*, just the phrase used by Paul.) At the presence of the Lord, and by a glorious act of His power, hardened sinners shall perish and disappear for ever, as the mist at sunrise, or as melting wax. The same thought is found in the following chapter, where the apostle prophe-

sies the end of Antichrist, "whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of His mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of His coming." (Compare Isa. xi. 4, "with the breath of His lips shall He slay the wicked.") We would call the attention of Professor Reuss to this undeniable meaning of the adjective *aionios*, which he omits to notice. With this exception, the well known critic adduces much to confirm our theory. "It is true," he says, "that no other passage exists in Paul's epistles which proclaims the eternity of suffering. We must not neglect to observe the interesting fact that Paul's theology shrinks from dwelling on pictures of death and damnation, while it loves to describe scenes of life and happiness. It is also true that the texts which deal most explicitly with final judgment, and which are likewise those containing most of the Judaic element, say absolutely nothing of the fate of the lost.

"This undeniable tendency of the apostle to dwell with pleasure on the consoling view of the future, and to pass over the other side of the picture, has perhaps originated the belief, which some theologians hold, in the restoration of the lost themselves, and the final blessing of all persons endowed with reason. This doctrine of 'Universalism,' which has been supported by many of the greatest thinkers of

the ancient Church and of modern days, although somewhat discredited by the zealous advocacy of ignorant enthusiasts, has been opposed with more violence than it deserved by the rigidly orthodox of all creeds, who have always held eternal torment as a favorite dogma.”¹

The view which we believe to be the more Scriptural one seems to include what amount of truth there is in that presented by Professor Reuss, inasmuch as, evil and evil doers being entirely destroyed, “God shall be all in all;” viz., in those who will be then in existence, having survived the deadly power of sin. (See also Obj. XXXIII.)

OBJ. XXIII.—We must be immortal, because we are “the offspring of God.”

See Obj. V. Sinners in their natural state can only be called children of God in a qualified sense.

OBJ. XXIV.—The “second death” consists in the separation of the soul from God.

Between the separation of the soul from God and the *second death* there is all the distance which separates the first chapters of Genesis from the last

¹ *History of Christian Theology in the Apostolic Age.* This work has been lately translated from the French, by A. Harwood; with a Preface and Notes by Rev. R. W. Dale, M. A.

chapters of Revelation ; the former began in Eden, the latter takes place after the resurrection. Besides, no existence is possible for a being absolutely cut off from God, in whom "all things consist." "In Him," said Paul, "we live, and move, and have our being": therefore, to be *completely* severed from God is to be severed from the source of being, in other words, to cease to exist. To threaten the sinner with separation from God, without adding that this separation implies utter destruction, is to forget that *communion with God*, far from being precious in the eyes of the impenitent, is only repugnant to them ; so that they would naturally congratulate themselves in their hearts on the prospect of being totally deprived of it. If, on the contrary, we threaten the sinner with the gradual *destruction* of his individuality, we appeal to the instinct of self-preservation, the strongest and keenest of all natural instincts, the first law of nature, as it has been called. His reason and conscience will alike confirm a decree that is in such perfect analogy with the laws of nature and society, as every day's experience proves. Death ends the incurable illness, the barren tree is cut down, and society thinks itself authorized to cut short the life of certain criminals.

OBJ. XXV.—This doctrine may not be dangerous, but we should fear to exceed the limits of Scripture.

This seems to insinuate that the doctrine exceeds the limits of Scripture ; then it *would* be dangerous, while you declare it need not be considered so.

OBJ. XXVI.—An impenitent sinner will be tempted to give himself up to evil if he has no other punishment to fear than extinction.

A similar objection has been made to the doctrine of justification by faith, which, some have asserted, leads to immorality. We believe that sinners should be won chiefly by pointing them to the forgiving Saviour, to the bliss they may lose forever, and to the Heavenly Father who awaits them with open arms. The preacher ought principally to dwell upon the certainty and value of the offered grace. An unfortunate girl is about to throw herself from Waterloo Bridge, because she thinks her lover has deserted her ; if she be told that he is willing to marry her, her love of life returns with tenfold force. Give twenty thousand pounds to the bankrupt who is on the point of committing suicide, and the instinct of self-preservation will at once make him fling the pistol away. But if the sinner must be alarmed, are there no terrors in the prospect of

the pangs of eternal death? nothing awful in utter extinction of being? The fact is that traditional theology still lingers in the train of barbarous legislation, when insisting upon interminable tortures and considering annihilation as a penalty of little weight. It would be more reasonable to assert that capital punishment is no punishment at all. And yet law and common sense unite in considering that penalty as the most terrible that can be inflicted. It consists only in a premature death which shortens physical life by a few years or a few days ; it adds nothing to future punishment ; and yet it appears so fearful that many philanthropists consider it excessive. What shall we say then of the death which is to end forever the existence of impenitent souls? Indeed, the doctrine of the destruction of the wicked possesses more deterring influence than the traditional doctrine can exert ; while it is free from one drawback, and has a special advantage of its own : it represents a God justly severe but not merciless, and it appeals to the instinct of self-preservation, one of the most powerful, though not one of the noblest impulses of human nature.

OBJ. XXVII.—If the soul can be dissolved like the body, it must be material.

We do not attempt, any more than the Bible does,

to define the nature of the soul. But who can prove that it is not a substance, sufficiently subtle to escape the discernment of our senses, (as the air we breathe formerly eluded the analysis of scientific men), a substance more subtle than ozone, ether, the astral dust in the ray of light, and other such impalpable fluids? "What is your life?" asks James; and he answers himself: "A vapor, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away." The Bible teaches that certain souls shall be destroyed; but how that shall be, we are not told, any more than we are told how souls are born and formed.

OBJ. XXVIII.—The progress made by this doctrine does not establish its truth.

No; but it obliges us to examine the proofs on which it rests.

OBJ. XXIX.—This doctrine diminishes the value of the merits of Jesus Christ and the work of redemption.

We reply that this doctrine, far from detracting from the merits of Christ's work, adds to them. It is more specifically divine to give life eternal than merely to save from pain. If sin entailed everlasting torments, the atonement was not so much an act of grace as of equity; so that the love manifested in

the sacrifice of the Redeemer would seem to lose something of its spontaneousness, and consequently of its moral value. We may add that if eternal suffering formed part of the sinner's doom, Jesus did not endure it, and that a portion of the debt due from us must therefore remain laid for ever to our charge. Some say, it is true, that the Divine nature of our Saviour invested His suffering of one day¹ with the value of an eternity of pain endured by countless mortals. But to follow out this reasoning, one pang undergone by Christ, or one single drop of His blood, would have sufficed, since His Divine nature would make them of infinite value. In the typical sacrifices of the old covenant, prolonged suffering was so absolutely foreign to the notion of expiation that if death was not instantaneous the victim was rejected. Even in the present day, and for the same reason, if the "*schochet*" (Jewish butcher) uses a knife with the slightest notch in the blade, so as to cause the least unnecessary suffering, the flesh of the slain animal is considered unclean, "*terepha*," and the faithful are forbidden to eat it. Neither was the burning of the victim an emblem of lingering agony,

¹ Or of three days. According to Calvin, Jesus suffered the torments of the lost in hell from Friday evening till Sunday. But the Redeemer's last words, "It is finished! Father, into Thy hands I commend My spirit," seem to bar this supposition.

as nothing but a *dead* unconscious body was consumed. It was rather an appropriate symbol of the utter destruction that threatens the hardened sinner.

As to the fruits of the work of redemption, they consist in the preservation, to an innumerable multitude of human beings, of an existence which had been forfeited, and in the magnificent gift of incorruptibility and eternal bliss. Are not these most precious and glorious results?

OBJ. XXX.—The most powerful preachers have proclaimed eternal torments.

Did not Augustine anathematize those who believed in the existence of the antipodes? and did not Calvin teach that fire and sword were fitting weapons to exterminate heretics? Great preachers often make great mistakes. Besides, all is not false in the traditional doctrine which we are opposing. The after life of the sinner, future retribution, a place of misery, (all of which are taught in the evangelico-Platonic theory), are elements of truth which have unfortunately been used in promoting error.

OBJ. XXXI.—This doctrine is calculated to lessen our anxiety for the salvation of souls.

On the contrary, it enkindles it, inasmuch as it sets forth with more clearness and certainty the ter-

rible punishment which threatens the guilty. When it calls upon the sinner, and startles him with the cry of "Fire! fire!" it appeals to Scripture, as well as to logic and to a universal law.

OBJ. XXXII.—The words of Jesus Christ are intended to inspire salutary terror.

A venerable octogenarian minister, one of the best biblical scholars of Switzerland, declared shortly before his death that, in his opinion, the view which we are advocating is more likely to deter from sin than any other; adding that the traditional doctrine must infallibly produce some vague and involuntary hope of a final relaxation of punishment. As an illustration, we may quote the teaching of a theological and reputedly orthodox faculty, at Neuchatel. According to the textbook which was in use, "the condition of a portion of the lost will finally become tolerable."

"All know that the sanguinary penal code of the last century operated indirectly, but powerfully, as a stimulus to crime. Witnesses would not come forward, juries refused to convict, when the result of their action would be the sacrifice of the life of a fellow-creature for a trifling offence. Severity of punishment therefore defeated its own end, by annexing a sort of security to crime, and thus remov-

ing the principal restraining force : certainty of retribution. Now, although no such mode of evasion can avail the sinner when he stands before the Judge at the penal assize, where no subordinate agencies, open to the weakness of human sympathies, can intervene in the arrest of the judgment ; yet, in this case also, the severity of the penalty denounced very often produces, though in quite a different way, precisely the same practical effect. The train of thought by which, from the dogma of eternal torment, the sinner deduces the conclusion that he will escape *all* punishment, is short and simple. He may be aware that the load which rests upon him is great and terrible, but still he feels that no amount of private sin can justly render him liable to infinite punishment. And the voice of conscience within him, in spite of every theologian, loudly proclaims that the Judge at whose bar he is about to stand is just. Feeling then, and rightly feeling, that the infinite sentence would be unjust, and being at the same time told by our popular theologians that he is sure of either eternal hell or heaven, it is easy to see how hope may spring up within him, and how he may bring himself to believe that, as God is surely just and hell eternal, and as, bad though he may be, he does not deserve *eternal* pun-

ishment, he may be admitted to heaven after all.”¹

“The day which sees a revival in Europe of the vigorous teaching of some more credible and striking doctrine on future punishment, credible by the general conscience of humanity, some doctrine which men cannot put aside as they do the common one, saying, ‘It is too horrible to be *true*,’ (some doctrine which will come home to their conscience as just, to their fears as most awful, and which will shut out all hope of redemption from it, when once the indignation begins,) that day will see quite a new public opinion on the ‘evil of sin’ among the impressible part of mankind. . . . It will see all souls which can be reached at all impressed with a sense of the reality and the awfulness of God’s coming judgment, as never before.”²

OBJ. XXXIII.—“Hell cast into the lake of fire.” (Rev. xx. 14.) Hell here is *Hades*, or the intermediate abode; *Eternal hell* is not destroyed.

So it is; but then where shall we look in the Bible for another word answering to *hell* in its usual meaning, viz., the final abode of the devil and of the wicked? Shall it be “the lake of fire”? We

¹ Professor Barlow, *Eternal Punishment and Eternal Death*, Chap. VII.

² Edward White, *The Rainbow*, 1871, page 129.

believe that, in the imagery of the Book of the Revelation, it symbolizes destruction as speedy as is consistent with the nature of the things to be destroyed. On the deadly effects of fire and brimstone, see Revelation itself (ix. 18), "men killed" by them. The Beast is to be DESTROYED (xvii. 8.) In the parallel passage of Daniel, the Beast is first slain, then its "dead body is cast into the fire to be consumed, destroyed, and UTTERLY BROUGHT TO AN END." (Dan. vii. 11, 26.) In Revelation, the Beast is cast into the lake of fire, then Hell and Death (xix. 20, xx. 14). Now the Beast, Hell and Death, are abstract or symbolic, being incapable of suffering. The Beast is a monster like a leopard, with the feet of a bear, the jaws of a lion, seven or eight heads, and ten horns (xiii., xvii. 8, 11). The false prophet is also an animal; he has the horns of a lamb and speaks like a dragon (xiii. 11, comp. xix. 20; xx. 10). What can be the meaning of such creatures being cast into the fire, if not the total suppression of the rebellion, the baneful influence and the blasphemy which they typify: in short, the END of moral evil? The signification remains the same for living creatures said to be cast into the gulf, the pit of destruction (Ps. lv. 24); blotted out of "the book of life," they vanish into nothingness. This idea is elsewhere expressed un-

der another figure : Babylon, the stronghold of sin, shall be sought for, and shall "be found no more at all" (xviii. 21).

"The last enemy that shall be DESTROYED is death," says Paul (1 Cor. xv. 26). But "death and hell" destroyed, then will commence the new and final state of the universe, and "God shall be all in all"; that is to say, in all who have survived unto that day.

Professor Reuss writes thus : "Is it not a contradiction to represent death as itself vanquished, nay, even destroyed, and yet to leave under its power the majority of men? Must we not choose between the two alternatives? Either we may adhere to the system and hold the eternal perdition of many, in which case death still remains as a power side by side with the power of God, which is a power of life or blessing; or, on the other hand, we may accept the fact of the destruction of death, as asserted in the passage quoted, and conclude from it the ultimate and final restoration of the lost. This conclusion may be suggested by another consideration. If the highest glory of God consists in being all in all, it is plain that it would be a flaw in the perfection of God were He anything less than this; it would be a detraction from his glory, if in some, and those the greater number of mankind, He should

be nothing. The religious conscience, no less than the logical sense, protests against any such imperfection in God and in the system."¹

These remarks of M. Reuss make us regret that he seems unacquainted with the view we uphold. It is the only one which, we believe, is the key to the problem well presented but left unsolved by him.

OBJ. XXXIV.—“They shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever.” (Rev. xx. 10.)

Who are “they?” The four figurative beings we have just mentioned; first, the two Beasts of Revelation xiii., then Hell and Death, all of which are incapable of suffering. The Devil is also cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, which, as we have stated, appears to be the symbol of annihilation. Hardened sinners will undergo the same fate, but it is not expressly said of them that they shall be tormented for ever. *Eternal smoke* (xiv. 11) is only the type of a constant and fearful memorial, if we remember Isaiah xxxiv. 10, the *eternal smoke* of Bozrah in Idumæa (Ps. xxxvii. 20; Isa. ix. 17, 18), lastly, Revelation xix. 3, the *eternal smoke* of the city of Babylon, which has utterly disappeared,

¹ See the work already quoted, Vol. II., p. 239, of the original.

“and shall be found no more at all” (xviii. 21). It is universally acknowledged that in the Bible, especially in certain books, there are hyperbolic language and many metaphors.¹ But the Book of the Revelation is so entirely made up of symbols and imagery that systematic theology can rarely appeal to it for conclusive evidence.² And dare we, upon one or two obviously hyperbolical expressions of a book of visions, construct the colossal dogma of the innate and absolute immortality of the human soul which the Bible, so far from teaching, never even mentions, and the revolting, irrational, and anti-

¹ Mark for instance the following expressions both of the original and in the usual version:—“A tower whose top may reach unto heaven” (Gen. xi. 4). “The Lord hath made thee as the stars of heaven for multitude” (Deut. x. 22). “The king made silver to be in Jerusalem as stones” (1 Kings x. 27). “Let them be confounded and troubled for ever . . . and perish” (Ps. lxxxiii. 17). “Bozrah” (the capital of Edom) “shall not be quenched night nor day; the smoke thereof shall go up for ever” (Isa. xxxiv. 10). The kings of Babylon and her mighty men “shall sleep a perpetual sleep, and not wake” (Jer. li. 39, 57). “A beam is in thine own eye” (Matt. vii. 3, 4). “If thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out . . . if thy right hand offend thee, cut it off” (verses 29, 30). “If any man come to Me, and hate not his father” (Luke xiv. 26). “Whoso eateth My flesh, and drinketh My blood, hath eternal life” (John vi. 54, 57, comp. 63). “We wrestle not against flesh and blood” (Eph. vi. 12, comp. Gal. v. 24). “Life promised before the world began:” Greek, “before eternal times” (Tit. i. 2); etc.

² “*Essai sur la Rédemption*,” by Fréd. Monnier, page 99.

scriptural doctrine of eternal torment? We might as well try to balance a mountain on the point of a needle. See Obj. XIII. and XXXIII.

OBJ. XXXV.—Sin committed against an infinite Being deserves infinite punishment.

Were this objection well founded, we might reply that the sinner's punishment is infinite, inasmuch as it deprives him of immortality, which is infinite in duration. But would it not be equally logical to say: Good works performed in the service of an infinite Being deserve infinite reward; so that one good work of Christ's would have sufficed to discharge the debt of humanity? No; "the finite nature of the sinner determines the quality of the action, rather than the infinite quality of the Being offended."—See Obj. XXIX.

OBJ. XXXVI.—It is written, "For our God is a consuming fire."¹ Let us fear to weaken the force of such a declaration.

This passage supports our theory. What God consumes ceases to exist; and herein lay the miracle of the "burning bush," which burnt and was NOT CONSUMED:² while of the wicked it is written, "the wrath of the Lord CONSUMED them as stubble."³

¹ Heb. xii. 29.

² Exod. iii. 2.

³ Exod. xv. 7.

APPENDIX II.

THE WORD "DEATH," AS USED IN THE OLD AND NEW TESTAMENTS.

We simply maintain that the word "death," when occurring in the Bible, ought to be understood in its ordinary sense ; which is, as dictionaries will tell us, in its full meaning, the extinction of life, the cessation of all activity and feeling.¹

Our opponents quote the words of Paul to the Colossians: "You, being DEAD in your sins, hath

¹ French *mort*; Anglo-Saxon *myrran* to scatter, squander; *myrthrian*, to murder. *Death*, from Anglo-Saxon, *adeadan*, to fail; Hebrew *mooth*, according to Parkhurst, meaning dissolution (compare 1 Sam. xxv. 37). Nabal, though struck by death, does not expire till ten days afterwards. Septuagint, *ekleipoo* (Jer. xlii. 17, 22). A contemporary thinker has defined death as "the last stage of corporeal weakness." The second state of death, that of corruption, reduction to dust, has received, in the Celtic language, the name of *moer*, whence the Latin *mors*, *mortis*, the French *mort*, the Italian *morte*, the Spanish *muerta*. From *mar* come the French *marais*, the English *marsh*, *morass*, the German *moor*, *morast*, *marschland*. The Greeks called the marshes *helos*, from the Gallic substantive *hel*, English *hell*. And have not marshes always been considered as the lurking

He quickened.”¹ They argue from this expression that a certain sort of life which, they say, may last for ever is compatible with a state of perpetual rebellion against God; and hence they conclude that death here means the cessation of one kind of existence, the passage from one state or world to another, viz., from communion with God into separation from Him. In the phraseology of traditional theology, the death of the soul, or spiritual death, is unregenerate life. Eternal death would thus be eternal life in sin and torture.

We believe, on the contrary, that the apostle's statement means, “Ye were [virtually] dead,” on your way to death. Death was there, though only in its germ; death had begun its work, but was prevented from completing it. By prolepsis, Paul anticipates the fatal results of total destruction, moral and physical, that sin would have wrought in his readers had they not received the gospel. We base

place of death, the lair of hideous reptiles, whose breath is poison? Is not Satan the prince of the lower regions? Hercules slew the hydra (from *hudor*, water) in the marsh of Lerna. *Mur* (French for *ripe*), formerly *meur*, the state of fruit about to decay. In short, *death*, in all languages, means dissolution.—*Lenglet-Mortier, Nouvelles Etymologies tirees du Gaulois.*

¹ Col. ii. 13; Eph. ii 1, 5; compare John v. 24; 1 John iii. 14. The following remarks can also be applied to Matt. viii. 22; Rom. vii. 9; 1 Tim. v. 6; Rev. iii. 1.

this interpretation of the passage upon the following arguments :

I. A prolepsis of exactly the same kind is found in the parallel passage of the Epistle to the Ephesians : "God hath quickened us," says the apostle ; adding, "HE HATH RAISED US up together, and MADE us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus." Although these verbs are in the past tense, they denote future events. The Christian will not obtain the promised reward until a more or less distant period.¹ In a similar manner Paul says, Rom. viii. 30, "whom He justified, them He also GLORIFIED," but tells us elsewhere, "we rejoice IN HOPE OF THE GLORY of God." (Chap. v. 2.) Again : "Christ HATH ABOLISHED DEATH," viz., proleptically, or virtually, for death is "the last enemy that SHALL be destroyed" (1 Cor. xv. 26).

II. In the Epistle to the Ephesians the apostle speaks of unconverted sinners as SLEEPERS (v. 14 ; compare 1 Thess. v. 6). Their slumber may prove MORTAL ; it is the precursor of death, and may possibly be their last sleep ; but it is NOT YET complete and hopeless *death*.

III. In many passages the apostle distinctly states that sin does not constitute the state of death, but

¹ Dean Alford's Commentary.—"A *man* born into the world" (John xvi. 21) is also a proleptical sentence.

leads to it (Rom. vi. 21, vii. 5). Compare 1 John v. 16, 17: "The sin UNTO death"; and 2 Cor. iv. 3, "Our gospel is hid to them that ARE PERISHING," not to them that have PERISHED. "The WAGES of sin is death." (Rom. vi. 23, compare Jas. i. 15.)

IV. Prolepsis or anticipation is a favorite figure of speech with the inspired writers, who use it especially in reference to death. In Genesis (xx. 3,) God, appearing to Abimelech, says to him: "Behold thou [art but] a DEAD man!"² in other words, "thou art threatened with instant death, and at once to die." The same expression has become common in modern European languages. From its emphatic nature such a figure of speech would readily be adopted by the bold pen of the Apostle to the Gentiles. "Abraham," he says, "considered not his own body now dead," that is to say, almost as good as dead (Rom. iv. 19; compare Heb. xi. 12,). "Therefore sprang there even of one, and him as good as dead (literally, 'of one who was dead,') so many as the stars of the sky in multitude."

There is another passage which we will quote, Romans viii. 10: "If Christ be in you, the body is

² *Hinnekah meth.* See also Exod. xii. 33, Num. xvii. 12, Isa. xxxviii. 1 (Heb.) A similar expression is found in the parable of the prodigal son: "My son was DEAD and is alive again."

DEAD because of sin ; but the spirit is life because of righteousness." Evidently, "dead" here means *virtually* dead, or destined to die ;¹ for in the following verse the apostle himself determines the sense by saying, "God shall quicken your MORTAL bodies."

V. It is impossible to accept the definition of death given by our opponents in the numerous passages that speak of *dying to sin, to the flesh, to the law*. (Rom. vi. 2, 6 ; vii. 4, 6 ; viii. 13 ; Gal. v. 24 ; Col. ii. 20 ; iii. 3 ; 1 Pet. ii. 24.) To "die to sin" does not mean to lay down a sinful life in order to take it up again under fresh conditions of existence ! No ; the "life in sin" is destined to TOTAL EXTINCTION, it must die out.² To die unto sin is to cease from it, to abandon guilty actions and feelings. The DEAD faith spoken of in the Epistle of James (ii. 26) is one which has really *ceased to exist*.

VI. Lastly, how can we establish any relation between the first and the second death, or how understand the latter phrase, if we assume an arti-

Hyperbolice et per prolepsin, i. e. quasi jam mortuum, certissime moriturum, mortis necessitati obnoxium. (Grimm, *Clavis N. T. Philologica*.) "*Under the power of death.*" (Alford.) "*Mortal, and will certainly die.*" (Ingram Cobbin.)

² "The fire performs its purifying process by absolutely ANNIHILATING the evil passion."—*John the Baptist*, by H. R. Reynolds, D. D., p. 273.

ficial interpretation of the term death? Would the Scriptures call second death a *mere continuation* of a previous state of alienation from God? We have already stated that we believe the "second death" to be exactly what its name implies,—the future extinction in Gehenna of both body and soul, the dissolution of the whole human being. This is doubtless the reason why it is never called "a sleep," as sleep involves the possibility of a return to active life.

Stress is also laid by our opponents on the words of God to Adam in Gen. ii. 17, "The day thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die." Since Adam did not die within the twenty-four hours after his fall, they argue that DEATH can mean a prolonged or even a perpetual LIFE in sin. But the word DAY, in the Bible, sometimes signifies a lengthened period.

In the fourth verse of the *same* chapter we read of "the DAY that the Lord God made the earth and the heavens and every plant." We know by the first chapter of Genesis that the plants were only created on the *third* day, therefore the day of Genesis ii. 4 includes at least *three* days; and there is little doubt that each of these days embraces a vast number of years.¹

¹ Respecting the occasionally indefinite sense of the word "day" in Scripture, compare also Luke xiii. 32.

With the Lord "one day is as a thousand years." If God had meant that the death of the first sinner was to be complete at his fall, a more precise term, such as hour or instant, would have been employed. Death may be a very gradual process; it may be slow or speedy, a lingering death, lasting for days, months, or even years, and all sinners may be said to lead but a dying life.¹ As to the death of the body, medical men do not yet agree as to the precise stage of decay at which it becomes total.

We therefore conclude that *death*, in the language of Scripture, signifies A GRADUAL LOSS OF LIFE AND EXISTENCE, ending in the complete and ultimate destruction of the creature spoken of.

The term may be employed *proleptically* with regard either to physical or to spiritual death, which leads us to make a fourfold distinction in its meaning :

I. Latent and gradual bodily death at work. (Rom. viii. 10 ; 1 Cor. xv. 22.)

II. Complete bodily death. (Phil. ii. 27.)

III. Latent and gradual spiritual death. (John v. 24 ; Eph. ii. 1, 5 ; Col. ii. 13 ; 1 John iii. 14.)

IV. Complete physical and spiritual death, or annihilation of the whole being. (Matt. x. 28 ;

¹ See the pathetic appeal of Adolphe Monod, "A dying man, to dying men."

Rom. vi. 21, 23 ; viii 13 ; Jas. i. 15 ; Rev. xxi. 8.)

We believe that every passage in which the term *death* occurs is sufficiently explained by applying the above definition.¹

¹ A prolepsis lies at the heart of the controversy relative to imputed and inwrought righteousness, faith and works : " God calls these things which be not as though they were [already]." Paul assigns superior importance to faith proleptically. Faith, according to him, implies works, of which it is the germ. Faith and works may be compared to the act of walking in reference to the direction taken. Both are alike indispensable for arriving at the goal ; but walking occupies the inferior position, because it is mechanical, while the sense of direction implies knowledge and will. The theory of salvation by what one DOES, and that of salvation by what one BELIEVES, are united and reconciled in that of salvation by what one BECOMES ; regeneration being unfailingly worked out by God in a true believer.

APPENDIX III.

SCRIPTURE PASSAGES IN SUPPORT OF CONDI- TIONAL IMMORTALITY.

I.

MAN IS NOT IMMORTAL BY NATURE.

Gen. iii. 4, 22-24. Ps. xlix. 20. Luke x. 25-28; xviii. 18. John iii. 6; v. 26; xiv. 6, 19. Rom. ii. 7; ix. 1, 3; xvi. 26. 1 Cor. xv. 44-55. 1 Tim. i. 17; vi. 16. 1 Pet. i. 23, 24. 2 Pet. i. 4. Rev. ii. 7, 11; xxi. 6; xxii. 14.

II.

IMMORTALITY IS A PRIVILEGE GRANTED TO THE RIGHTEOUS, AND A BOON OFFERED TO THE PENITENT.

Ps. xxi. 4. Prov. xii. 28. Luke x. 20; xix. 10; xx. 35. John iii. 16; v. 21, 24, 39, 40; vi. 33, 34, 35, 51, 53, 63, 68; viii. 51; x. 10, 28; xi. 25; xiv. 19. Acts v. 20; xi. 18. Rom. vi. 23; viii. 11. Phil. iv. 3. Col. iii. 4. 1 Tim. vi. 12. 2 Pet. iii. 9. 1 John ii. 17, 25; iv. 9. Rev. xxii. 17.

III.

IMMORTALITY IS A CONDITIONAL PRIVILEGE.

Lev. xviii. 5. Deut. xxx. 15, 20; xxxii. 46, 47
 Prov. viii. 12, 35, 36. Ezek. xviii. 20, 26, 28, 30,
 32. Matt. vii. 13; xix. 16, 17. John iii. 14, 15;
 xii. 25. Rom. viii. 6, 13. 2 Cor. ii. 15. Gal. vi.
 7, 8. 1 Tim. vi. 12. Tit. i. 2. Heb. vi. 7, 8; x.
 39; xii. 29. 1 Pet. ii. 11. 1 John v. 11, 12. Rev.
 ii. 7; iii. 5.

IV.

DEATH THREATENED AS THE SINNER'S DOOM.

Gen. ii. 16, 17; iii. 4, 19. Ps. i. 6; ii. 12; ix.
 5; xxi. 9, 10; xlix. 10, 19, 20; xciv. 23. Prov.
 xxiv. 20. Matt. vii. 19; viii. 12; x. 28; xvi. 26;
 xxi. 41; xxv. 29. Luke xiii. 4, 5. John iii. 36;
 v. 40; xv. 6. Acts xiii. 46. Rom. i. 28, 32; ii.
 5-8; v. 12; vi. 21, 23; vii. 5. 1 Cor. iii. 16, 17.
 2 Cor. iv. 3. Phil. iii. 18, 19. 1 Tim. vi. 9. Heb.
 x. 26, 27. Jas. i. 15; v. 20. 1 John iii. 15.

V.

LOSSES SUFFERED BY THE SINNER, EVEN
THOUGH PENITENT.

Num. xiv. 20-32. 2 Sam. vii. 14; xii. 10-14.
 Ps. cxviii. 18. Isa. i. 9; xlviii. 9, 10. Jer. iv. 27;
 xlvi. 28. Lam. iii. 21, 22. Amos iv. 11. Matt.
 xviii. 9. Luke ix. 25. John xv. 1, 2. Acts xxvii.
 21, 22. Rom. viii. 10. 1 Cor. iii. 13, 15; xi. 20-
 32. 2 Cor. ix. 6.

VI.

GOD NEVER PUNISHES WILLINGLY, AND HIS CHASTISEMENTS, WHICH ARE ALWAYS PROPORTIONED TO MAN'S OFFENCES, NEVER EQUAL HIS BENEFITS.

Gen. ix. 1. Exod. xxxiv. 6, 7. Ps. xxx. 5; ciii. 9; cxlv. 17. Prov. xxxi. 6, 7. Isa. xii. 1. Lam. iii. 33. Joel ii. 13, 14. Matt. xii. 32; xxi. 41; xxvi. 24. Mark iii. 29. Luke vi. 35; xii. 47, 48. Rom. v. 15, 20.

VII.

THE FINAL ANNIHILATION OF THE WICKED.

Ps. ix. 5; xxxvii. 10, 20, 36; xcii. 7; cxv. 8; cxlv. 20. Isa. li. 5, 6. Obad. 16. Mal. iv. 1-3. Matt. xiii. 30, 40, 48, 49; xxi. 41, 44. 1 Thess. v. 3. 2 Thess. i. 9. Heb. x. 27; xii. 29. Rev. xx. 11-15.

VIII.

THE END OF SATAN AND OF THE POWER OF EVIL.

Gen. iii. 14, 15; Dan. vii. 11, 26. Rom. xvi. 20. 1 Cor. xv. 26, 28. Col. i. 19, 20. 2 Thess. ii. 8. 2 Tim. i. 10. Heb. ii. 14, 15; ix. 26. 1 John iii. 8. Rev. v. 13; xxi. 4, 5; xxii. 3.









